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DE WITT'S ACTING PLAYS.

(Number 386.)

WON BACK.

A PLAY,

IN FOUR ACTS.

By CLIFTON W. TAYLEURE.

TOGETHER WITH

A Description of the Costumes—Cast of the Characters—Entrances and Exits—Relative Positions of the Performers on the Stage—and the whole of the Stage Business.

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*** These Plays require but one scene, unless otherwise stated. The figures in the columns indicate the number of characters—M. male; F. Female.

No.	M.	F.
141. Absent Minded, Eth. farce	3	1
73. African Box, Eth. burlesque, 2 sc.	5	
107. Africanus Bluebeard, Eth. musical burlesque	6	2
113. Ambition, Irish farce, 2 scenes	7	
133. Awful Plot (An), Eth. farce	3	1
43. Baby Elephant, Eth. sketch, 2 sc.	7	1
42. Bad Whiskey, Irish sketch	3	1
79. Barney's Courtship, Irish musical interlude	1	1
40. Big Mistake, Ethiopian sketch	4	
155. Black Brigands, musical burlesque	8	
6. Black Chap from Whitechapel, Ethiopian farce	4	
10. Black Chemist, Ethiopian sketch	3	
11. Black-Ey'd William, Eth. sketch, 2sc.	4	1
146. Black Forrest (The), Eth. farce	2	1
110. Black Magician, Eth. comicality	4	2
126. Black Statue (The), Eth. farce	4	2
127. Blinks and Jinks, Eth. sketch	3	1
128. Bobolino, the Black Bandit, Eth. musical farce	2	2
120. Body Snatchers (The), Eth. sketch 2 scenes	4	
78. Bogus Indian, sketch, 4 scenes	5	2
89. Bogus Talking Machine, Eth. farce	4	
24. Bruised and Cured, Eth. Sketch	2	
108. Charge of the Hash Brigade, comic Irish musical sketch	2	2
148. Christmas Eve in the South, Eth. farce	6	2
35. Coal Heaver's Revenge, Eth sketch	6	
112. Coming Man, Eth. sketch, 2 scenes	3	1
41. Cremation, Eth. sketch, 2 scenes	8	1
144. Crowded Hotel (The), sketch	4	1
140. Cupid's Frolics, sketch	5	1
12. Daguerreotypes, Eth. sketch	3	
53. Damon and Pythias, Eth. burlesque 2 scenes	5	1
63. Darkey's Stratagem, Eth. sketch	3	1
131. Darkey Sleep Walker, Eth. sketch	3	1
124. Deaf as a Post, Eth. sketch	2	
111. Deeds of Darkness, Eth. extravaganza	6	1
139. Desperate Situation, farce	5	2
159. Dodging the Police, farce	6	3
157. Don't Get Weary, musical sketch	1	1
50. Draft (The), Eth. sketch, 2 scenes	6	
64. Dutchman's Ghost (The), sketch	4	1
95. Dutch Justice, Dutch sketch	11	
67. Editor's Troubles, farce	6	
4. Eh? What is it? Eth. sketch	4	1
136. Election Day, Eth. farce, 2 scenes	6	1
98. Elopement (The), farce, 3 scenes	4	1
52. Excise Trials, Eth. sketch	10	1
25. Fellow that Looks like Me, interlude	2	1

No.	M.	F.
88. First Night, Dutch farce	4	2
51. Fisherman's Luck, Eth. sketch	2	
152. Fun in a Cooper's Shop, Eth. sketch	6	
106. Gambrinus, King of Lager Beer, Eth. burlesque, 2 scenes	8	1
157. Gentlemen Coon's Parade, Eth. musical sketch	3	
83. German Emigrant, Dutch sketch	2	2
77. Getting Square on the Call Boy, Eth. sketch	3	
17. Ghost (The), Eth. sketch	2	
58. Ghost in a Pawn Shop, Eth. sketch	4	
31. Glycerine Oil, Eth. sketch, 2 sc.	3	
20. Going for the Cup, Eth. interlude	4	
82. Good Night's Rest, sketch	3	
130. Go and Get Tight, Eth. farce	6	
86. Gripsack (The), sketch	3	
70. Guide to the Stage, Eth. sketch	3	
61. Happy Couple, farce	2	1
142. Happy Uncle Rufus, Eth. musical sketch	1	1
23. Hard Times, Eth. extravaganza	5	1
118. Helen's Funny Babies, Eth. burlesque	6	
3. Hemmed In, Eth. sketch	3	1
48. High Jack, the Heeler, Eth. sketch	6	
68. Hippotheatron, sketch	9	
150. How to Pay the Rent, farce	6	
71. In and Out, sketch	2	
123. Intelligence Office, Eth. sketch	2	1
33. Jealous Husband, Eth. sketch	2	1
94. Julius the Snoozer, Eth. burlesque 3 scenes	6	1
103. Katrina's Little Game, Dutch act	1	2
1. Last of the Mohicans, Eth. sketch	3	1
36. Laughing Gas, Eth sketch	6	1
161. Limekiln Club in an Uproar (The), Eth. farce	8	1
18. Live Injun, Eth. sketch, 4 scenes	4	1
60. Lost Will (The), Eth. sketch	4	
37. Lucky Job, farce, 2 scenes	3	2
90. Lunatic (The), Eth. farce	3	
109. Making a Hit, Eth. farce, 2 scenes	4	
19. Malicious Trespass, Eth. sketch	3	
149. 'Meriky, Eth. farce	3	1
151. Micky Free, Irish sketch	5	
96. Midnight Intruder, farce	6	1
147. Milliner's Shop, Eth sketch	2	1
129 Moko Marionettes, Eth. eccentricity, 2 scenes	4	5
101. Molly Moriarty, Irish musical sketch	1	1
117. Motor Bellows, farce	4	
158. Mr. Mikado, musical burlesque	6	4
44. Musical Servant, Eth. sketch	3	
8. Mutton Trial, Eth. sketch, 2 sc.	4	
119. My Wife's Visitors, farce	6	1

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No. 33 Rose Street.

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CHARACTERS.

HUGH RANSOME, of New York—Juvenile.
HAROLD KING, of Alabama—Leading.
AUSTIN BROOKES, of Virginia—Eccentric.
FRANK POWERS, of Connecticut—First walking gentleman.
HOMER C. COOKE, of South Carolina—Comedy.
ABNER P. DECKER, of Massachusetts—Comedy.
MISS CONSTANCE BURWELL, of Maryland—Star.
MISS LULU OSBORNE, of Philadelphia—Leading.
MRS. ADELGITHA BARBOUR, of Virginia—Comedy.
MISS KATE BARBOUR, her daughter.
Soldiers and Citizens.

TIME IN PLAYING—TWO AND A HALF HOURS.

SCENERY.

ACT I.—Handsomely furnished drawing-room of hotel in Washington, D. C., 1860. Doors C., R. 1 E. and L. 1 E.; tete-a-tete C.; table, with pitcher, glasses, and bowl, L. C.; chair and hassock near table, L. C.

ACT II.—Same as Act I.

ACT III.—Handsomely furnished drawing-room of hotel in New York City, 1861. Doors R. 1 E., L. 1 E. and C.; windows in flat each side of C. D., running to floor.

ACT IV.—View of camp of "Confederate" soldiers near Winchester, Va., on flat at back; small set cottage, rather dilapidated, used as officers' headquarters, R. 3 E.; small table or stand, with book on, in front of cottage, R. C.; light snow falling; camp fire C.

COSTUMES.

HUGH RANSOME.—Act I, Evening party or ball dress. Act II, Genteel morning dress. Act III, Uniform of Colonel of U. S. Volunteers. Act IV, Same uniform, but somewhat worn and faded.

HAROLD KING.—Act I, Evening or ball dress. Act II, Genteel morning dress. Act III, Genteel travelling dress. Act IV, Uniform of Brigadier-General of Confederate army.

AUSTIN BROOKES.—Act I, Evening party or ball dress. Act II, Genteel morning dress. Act III, Stylish travelling suit, hat and gloves. Act IV, Uniform of Major in Confederate army.

HOMER COOKE.—Act I, Evening party dress. Act II, Neat walking costume, with hat and gloves. Act III, Same as Act II, in first part; in second part, clothes muddy and disarranged, coat torn up back. Act IV, Worn and ragged uniform of Confederate soldier, slouch hat.

ABNER DECKER.—Act I, Evening party dress. Act II, Ordinary business suit, with hat. Act III, Same as Act II. Act IV, Ragged uniform of Confederate soldier, slouch hat, barefooted or with old, dilapidated shoes, beard long and neglected.

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FRANK POWERS.—Act I, Genteel evening dress. Act II, Stylish morning dress. Act III, Genteel business suit, with hat and gloves, in first part; uniform of Captain of United States Volunteers in second part.

CONSTANCE BURWELL.—Act I, Ball dress, rich but not gaudy. Act II, Stylish morning costume. Act III, Genteel afternoon dress. Act IV, Dress of hospital nurse, with badge of U. S. Sanitary Commission.

LULU OSBORNE.—Act II, Stylish travelling costume, with hat and wrap, in first part; genteel afternoon dress in second part. Act III, Genteel afternoon dress.

MRS. BARBOUR.—Act I, Evening party dress, such as would be suitable for a woman of forty or over, fan, etc. Act II, Dark morning dress. Act III, Afternoon dress, with evidences of a hasty toilet. Act IV, Clothes several years behind the fashion, but clean and whole; hat and wraps to correspond.

KATE BARBOUR.—Act I, Evening party dress, with fan, etc. Act II, Stylish morning costume. Act III, Afternoon dress. Act IV, Dress old-fashioned, but neat and of good material; hat and wraps to correspond.

PROPERTIES.

ACT I.—Fan for MRS. BARBOUR; bottle of smelling salts for ABNER; package of letters tied with ribbon for HUGH; portrait for do.

ACT II.—Note for HOMER; same for ABNER; gloves for HUGH.

ACT III.—"Extra" newspaper for AUSTIN; same for HOMER and ABNER; pocket-books with bills for HOMER and ABNER; roll of bank-notes for AUSTIN; musket with sabre-bayonet, also bowie-knife, pistol, and havelock, for ABNER.

ACT IV.—Barrel with both heads out, and holes in sides to admit arms of a man, for HOMER; sword and revolver for AUSTIN; musket with fixed bayonet for ABNER; pencil or fountain pen for HAROLD, also folded paper.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means Right of Stage, facing the Audience; L. Left; C. Centre; R. C. Right of Centre; L. C. Left of Centre; D. F. Door in the Flat, or Scene running across the back of the Stage; C. D. F. Centre Door in the Flat; R. D. F. Right Door in the Flat; L. D. F. Left Door in the Flat; R. D. Right Door; L. D. Left Door; 1 E. First Entrance; 2 E. Second Entrance; U. E. Upper Entrance; 1, 2 or 3 G. First, Second or Third Groove.

R. R. C. C. L. C. L.

☞ The reader is supposed to be upon the stage, facing the audience.

SYNOPSIS.

The characters in this play are types of the society in Washington, D. C., thirty years ago, with their characteristics intensified by the stirring scenes of the period. A fashionable "hop" in a Washington hotel introduces most of them to the audidience, and shows that some of them at least, are seeking by the usual subterfuges to better their fortunes, and others, younger, and more impressionable, are swayed by the tender passion to the point of fierce rivalry. The comedy element of the play is confined mostly to ABNER DECKER and HOMER COOKE, a typical New Englander and a South Carolinian, and to MRS. BARBOUR, a Virginia widow, no longer young, but still fond of gaiety and flattered by attention. Her daughter KATE, a lively girl, with two would-be lovers, is a pleasing character, who finds it rather hard to be serious under any circumstances. HUGH RANSOME, a New York banker, shows himself every inch a man; and HAROLD KING, a blue-blooded Alabamian, led by his jealousy and disappointment to the verge of crime, at last developes the nobleness that is in him. LULU OSBORNE (who marries RANSOME) is a loveable young woman; and CONSTANCE BURWELL, the heroine of the play, loved by both RANSOME and KING, is a noble character, and after many vicissitudes is "Won Back" by her first love.

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS.

ACT I.—DRAWING-ROOM, ARLINGTON, WASHINGTON—1860.

"Whom first we love, you know, we seldom wed;
Time rules us all; and life indeed is not
The thing we planned it out, ere hope was dead,
And then, we women cannot choose our lot."

In fetters—The rivals—North and South—The coy widow—A noted duelist—An old affection—The dismissal—The rivals meet—"You shall answer for this"—Farewell.

ACT II.—SAME SCENE—1860.

"Who might have been—Ah, *what*, I dare not think!
We all are changed. God judges for the best.
God help us do our duty, and not shrink,
And trust in Heaven humbly for the rest."

Broken ties—A Vassar girl's idea of matrimony—A Washington savage—Schooling a lover—Affairs of honor—The Northern fire-eater—The missing challenge—Betrothed.

ACT III.—DRAWING-ROOM IN A NEW YORK HOTEL—1861.

"With bayonets slanted in the glittering light,
With solemn roll of drums,
With starlit banners rustling wings of night,
The knightly concourse comes."

To arms! To arms!—Stand by the flag—A woman's duty—A skirmish in the parlor—On to Richmond—Reunited—The passing regiment.

ACT IV.—CONFEDERATE CAMP AT WINCHESTER—1864.

"No more shall the war cry sever, or the winding river be red;
They banish our anger forever, when they laurel the graves of our dead."

A coward's armor—A hand to hand struggle—Hugh captured—Sentenced to be shot—A ministering angel—Harold King's revenge—The attack on the camp—Death of King—After the battle—Won Back.

WON BACK.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Drawing-room of a hotel in Washington, furnished as usual. A Hop is in progress.*

Music. Enter MRS. BARBOUR *as if overcome by heat, followed by* HOMER COOKE *with fan, and* ABNER *with salts,* C.

MRS. BARBOUR (*sitting languidly on tete-a-tete,* C.). The room was insufferably warm! I feel as if I should faint! (*both gentlemen bustlingly offer assistance.*)

HOMER (*energetically fanning her,* R.) This will revive you, my dear Mrs. Barbour.

ABNER (*scowling at* HOMER). Of what use is a fan in a critical case like this? (*tenderly*) Dear Mrs. Barbour, have a whiff of these aromatic smelling salts; they are not very strong. (*takes a whiff himself, and is nearly suffocated*) Not *very* strong.

MRS. B. (*smiling on both*). You are very kind, gentlemen—both. I don't know what I should have done without you. (*coquettishly.*)

HOMER (*aside*). All sarcasm, yet he won't take it, the stupid Yankee!

ABNER (*aside*). Hangs to her like a shadow, yet he calls himself a Southern gentleman. The bully!

HOMER (*to* ABNER, *fiercely*). Sir! Did you speak to *me,* sir!

ABNER (*fiercely*). No sir! Did you hear me speak, sir?

HOMER. No, sir; but you *looked* as though you wanted to speak to me, sir.

ABNER. Not to *you,* sir! I have better use for my time, sir.

HOMER. Peddling nutmegs or shoe-pegs, I suppose, sir.

ABNER (*fiercely*). Sir!

HOMER (*aggressively*). Sir!

MRS. B. (*pretending faintness*). Oh dear, how dizzy I feel! (*both assiduously renew attentions.*)

HOMER (*runs and gets it from table*). Take a drink of this ice-water. (*offering it.*)

ABNER (*getting slop-bowl from table*). *That's* not ice-water; this is. Take a sip, dear Mrs. Barbour.

MRS. B. (*looking fondly from one to the other*). Thank you. It will pass off in a minute. (*the two lovers go up to table to return glasses and nearly collide.*)

HOMER (*aside*). Why the devil don't he go! The adhesive plaster!

ABNER (*aside*). He won't see he's not wanted. The artesian bore!

Mrs. B. I am afraid I danced too much. But these hotel hops are very enticing.

Homer *and* Abner (*together*). Oh, very.

Mrs. B. Then I was stirred into emulation by the example of Constance Burwell and Harold King. How gracefully they danced.

Homer. Awfully graceful.

Abner. They are engaged, I believe?

Mrs. B. So report says.

Homer. She certainly couldn't find a better husband hereabouts, if as good. Harold King comes from one of the blue-blooded families of Alabama.

Mrs. B. And Constance from one of the oldest families of Maryland.

Homer (*doubtfully*). Ye-es. But she has spent the best part of her life in the North, and, of course, has been affected by her associations.

Abner (*bristling*). Do you mean to insinuate, sir, that life in the free North isn't wholesome to the blue blood of the South?

Homer (*bristling*). I mean, sir, that birds of a feather should herd together.

Abner (*sneering*). Flock together, sir! Birds flock, sheep herd. And pray, sir, why don't you stick to your flocks in the South?

Homer. For the same reason, I presume, that you left your herds in the North to come to Washington—I chose to do otherwise.

Abner. Very much *other*-wise. (*aside*) Infernally stupid, *I* should say. (*aloud*) We can spare him if he wants to go back, eh, Mrs. Barbour? Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. B. You forget that I too am Southern.

Abner. Oh, but you're the widow of a Northern man, and reside among Northern people.

Homer (*sneering*). Both of which, I suppose *you* think possess a civilizing tendency?

Abner (*coarsely*). Not always. They don't appear to have affected you any. Ha, ha, ha!

Homer (*annoyed*). No, sir, I am vaccinated—inoculated, I mean.

Mrs. B. Unfortunately Mr. Cooke has not had the full benefit of these influences. He is a resident of Washington, 'tis true, but not yet, like myself, a widow. Ha, ha, ha!

Abner. Ah, well. That isn't his *only* misfortune, however.

Homer. You are right, knowing *you* ought to count for something.

Mrs. B. Two years ago Constance was engaged to Hugh Ransome, the New York banker, but he suddenly broke off the match, and began to pay attentions to Lulu Osborne, daughter of a rich mine owner of Pennsylvania.

Homer (*dryly*). Lucky Miss Burwell.

Mrs. B. What! For being jilted—cast off by Hugh Ransome?

Homer. No; but for escaping from a Yankee lover, totally unworthy of her.

Abner (*ironically*). You are right. Of course inconstant lovers are confined wholly to the North. Whoever heard of a Southern man jilting his sweetheart?

Homer (*threateningly*). If you slander my section, I'll ——

Abner (*turning up his cuffs*). Try it, and you'll spend the next month in a hospital.

Mrs. B. (*starting up apprehensively*). Oh, gentlemen, please don't fight! This excitement is too much—I shall faint! Catch me! (*each starts to catch her; she falls, clasping the neck of each.*)

Abner (*furiously fanning her*). Look up, Adelgitha—*I* am here!

HOMER (*thrusting salts under her nose*). Dear Mrs. Barbour, I won't fight, if you say so.

MRS. B. (*reviving*). Where am I?

ABNER. At the Arlington House, beloved! (*tries to kiss her, repulsed by* HOMER.)

HOMER (*glaring at* ABNER). Here! here! adored Mrs. Barbour! (*attempts to kiss her.*)

ABNER (*preventing*). Coward! to take advantage of a dying woman.

HOMER (*releasing* MRS. B.). Coward! come on!

ABNER (*releasing* MRS. B., *who staggers*). I'm your man! Come on!

Enter, C., KATE, *quickly followed by* AUSTIN. ABNER *and* HOMER *suddenly conceal their belligerence under affected smiles;* ABNER *hums a song, and unobserved shakes fist at* HOMER, *who responds.*

KATE (*excitedly*). Oh, mamma! who do you think is in town, here in this hotel? Hugh Ransome!

MRS. B., HOMER, *and* ABNER (*together*). Hugh Ransome!

HOMER. Well, he must have the cheek of a bronze statue to come here!

AUSTIN. If he is wise he will keep out of the way of King. Harold is a noted duelist, a dead shot, and——

ABNER (*interrupting*). And wouldn't hesitate to murder his rival, I suppose.

AUSTIN. Murder him! No, indeed. Harold King isn't that kind of a man, sir. He'd provoke him into a duel, and kill him; but I hope, Decker, you don't call that murder.

ABNER. Well, it is considerably more decorous and—and—ceremonious, but I'm afraid it amounts to the same thing.

HOMER. Mr. Decker is from the North, Austin, and is, of course, opposed to dueling.

ABNER. No, sir, I am not. No, sir. If you, or anybody resembling you, think Abner Decker won't respond, quick, just let them invite me out. That's all.

AUSTIN. What, invite you out to "smile"? (HOMER *laughs good humoredly.*)

ABNER (*glaring at* HOMER). Smile indeed! No, sir; to fight! Durn my hat! I don't know what fear is; I was born without it! Oh, that's *me!* (*waltz music heard.*)

KATE. There's the waltz! Come, Mr. Brookes; I wouldn't miss it for the world. (*taking* AUSTIN'S *arm*) And it's your favorite, mamma. Hugh Ransome has no partner; come dance with him. Hurry!

[*Waltzes out with* AUSTIN, C.

MRS. B. Do you waltz, Mr. Cooke?

HOMER. Well, I can go around a little.

ABNER (*bursts into a loud laugh*). So can a squirrel in a cage. But "going around" isn't waltzing. Ha, ha, ha!

MRS. B. *You* waltz of course, Mr. Decker?

ABNER (*suddenly checking his laughter*). Ahem! Yes—yes I could, only I'm subject to vertigo.

HOMER. Ha, ha, ha! Oh no! That is no go. (ABNER *turns fiercely on him.*)

MRS. B. No matter; I shall easily find a partner. You'll escort me to the parlor, won't you? (*looking coquettishly from one to the other. Both dart forward and offer an arm.*)

HOMER *and* ABNER (*together, gallantly*). Certainly! Allow me.

Mrs. B. (*taking an arm of each. Tenderly*). You really must learn to waltz. (*looking from one to the other and going up stage*) It is so fascinating. (*stops*) Oh, I have forgotten my fan! Bring it for me, please. (*Music, forte. Both gentlemen run eagerly forward to get fan.* Mrs. B. *runs out* c., *laughing.*)

Homer (*having hold of fan, down* c., *fiercely*). *I* was specially requested to bring this fan, sir.

Abner (*also having hold of fan, fiercely*). So was I specially requested to bring it; and I mean to do it!

Homer (*resolutely*). So do I, sir, or I'll perish in the attempt!

Abner (*menacingly*). You mean to fight then?

Homer. To the death, sir!

Abner (*solemnly*). Your blood be on your own head! Come on! (*squares off.*)

Homer. One moment till I peel. (*relinquishes grasp of the fan and turns to take off coat.* Abner *runs out* c. *with fan*) Now come on. Coward! where are you? Tricked. Here, stop! (*is running off* c., *stumbles over hassock, upsets chair, and colliding with* Powers, *who precedes* Ransome, *runs out* c.)

Enter, c., Frank Powers *and* Hugh Ransome.

Frank. I think that gentleman is in a hurry. But what brought you here, Ransome?

Hugh. *Her* demand for her letters.

Frank. Yes, but to journey from New York to Washington merely to hand over a package of old love letters seems to me to be, in the highest degree, incomprehensible—that is to say, silly.

Hugh. You are right. But I am impelled by a power I cannot resist to see her once again.

Frank. The vanity of a lover, my friend. You would excite once more into flame, before it is utterly extinguished, the last spark of that flame, in the brilliant light of which Hope whispers to Youth its first romance of Love.

Hugh. Perhaps so.

Frank. Better throw yourself into the Potomac than trifle thus with danger. Do you really love Constance Burwell?

Hugh. Three years ago, when through an absurd jealousy of Harold King, I broke off my engagement with her, I thought I did not; but now——

Frank. But now that she prefers another, you think you do love her. Well, does she retain any of the old-time love for you?

Hugh. I hope so; yet am afraid not; else she could never have surrendered me so calmly—could never have encouraged the wooing of Harold King.

Frank. Nonsense! Women are creatures of change, and like ourselves need new emotions to keep them alive. One thing seems clear enough; she is very fond of Harold King.

Hugh (*with heat*). A man utterly unworthy of her; and, to crown all, a duelist, who mocks at the sanctities of life.

Frank (*laughing*). A man, therefore, to be respectfully avoided.

Hugh. Not by me! Not every duelist is a man of courage. I shall not on that account shrink from encountering him. Upon my life fall all the consequences of my folly—my madness.

Frank. But what if some of these consequences should fall upon *her* life also, and so subject your heart to remorse or regret?

HUGH. Remorse never! Regret is already throned upon my life. Regret that I should have overlooked the nobility of this true woman—should have heard the music of love, and yet have missed the tune.

FRANK. Take my advice: don't look back; remember the fate of Mrs. Lot.

HUGH. Who can resist Destiny? We are the sport of invisible powers. What *might* have been, I cannot now pause to reflect upon. What *must* be, is now the question of my life. Some one comes! 'Tis she; and with *him!* I must not meet them now; my business is with her, alone. This way. [*Exit* HUGH *and* FRANK, R. 1 E.

Enter, C., CONSTANCE *and* HAROLD.

CONSTANCE. You are wrong, Harold. If I seem to hesitate over your question, 'tis less through doubt of your worthiness than of my power to escape from one haunting regret; my ability to emancipate my own life, and fulfill once more a woman's mission and a woman's hopes.

HAROLD. I understand you. Yet why should the treachery of Hugh Ransome cloud all your life, and darken your name?

CONST. Because it unsettled my faith in man! Because, though my heart was not broken, yet all its fibres were tested and strained by this cruel trial of endurance. That rude lesson taught me the need of carefully sheltering my life from my own heart; taught me also to distrust the heart of another. (*turns away to conceal her emotion.*)

HAROLD. Not to mistrust mine, I hope? (*she suddenly turns and places her hand in his.*)

CONST. Oh no—no!

HAROLD. You fence with a feeling which in spite of all mistrust you know to be pure and intense. Why not conquer doubt with hope? Must the shadow of the past forever obscure the dawn of the future?

CONST. Ah, my friend, we are not what we *would* be, but what we *must* be; our real existence has its springs less in what we *do* than what we feel.

HAROLD. Then 'tis for *your* life, as well as for my own, that I plead. Once more I offer you a name, fortune, and power to fulfill your mission. Once more I implore you to save and sanction the life I have dedicated to you! Stoop and raise me to your own pure height! Be my wife!

CONST. Your offer is too precious to me, in worth and in honor, to be lightly met, or lightly dealt with. I ask but time to reflect.

HAROLD. Think of the years I have waited. Besides, have you forgotten that one month ago you promised me your decision to-night!

CONST. I remembered, but hoped you would not press for that decision.

HAROLD. And why not, since my destiny hangs upon your answer?

CONST. Because—because—Oh! I cannot answer you to-night.

HAROLD. One question more. Pardon, but 'tis my right to ask it boldly; it is your duty to answer truly. Shall I go on?

CONST. (*apprehensively*). Ye-es! Better face the truth at once.

HAROLD. This Hugh Ransome, who broke his troth to you, and as lightly plighted it to another, are you quite certain that all love for him has been extinguished?—that were he once again to re-enter your life, you would not again take his worthless heart into the precious caress of your own.

CONST. (*after pause*). Quite certain. But I will not conceal from you that I have not forgotten the past; and if I pause before your ardent

entreaties, it is because I am brave enough and honest enough not to give you at once, in exchange for *your* gifts of name, fortune, love, a heart which at best is but a ruin!

HAROLD (*seizing her hand*). A ruin which, trust me, dearest, I will yet rebuild!

CONST. And now may I beg you to leave me to myself?

HAROLD. One more word. May I hope?

CONST. (*after pause*). Yes. Hope that peace may once more come to my heart, and content to yours.

HAROLD (*kissing her hand*). Thrice blessed word! Doubt not, my Constance, that faith shall yet justify this hope, and love crown both.

[*Exit*, C.

CONST. (*pondering*). It would be more than madness—it would be criminal—longer to cherish this hope, which even treachery could not extinguish. The being I once loved exists no more. The image which fancy seems ever to shape from the solitude left around the ruins of the past, is a phantom! What I hear in the silence, and see in the lone void of life, is not a reality; 'tis but an ideal hero, born of my perished youth! He who survives is but the hard, cold apt pupil of the world! Tears! Pshaw! (*forcing back her emotion*) Well, they but widen yet more the gulf which separates the present from the past. (*rising*) My decision is made. I will wed Harold King! The ghosts of the past shall not forever scourge back the hopes of the future. (*with outburst of emotion*) Yet, oh my God! how shall I tear from my heart the memories I have secretly cherished there!

Enter, quickly, R. 1 E., MRS. BARBOUR. CONSTANCE *subdues her emotion, and affects a gaiety she does not feel.*

Ah, Mrs. Barbour, you come responsive to my wish. Does this flower become me? 'Tis not my color, you know; but Harold gave it me, and for his sake I must wear it. He is to be——

MRS. B. (*interrupting*). Have you seen him, my dear?

CONST. (*lightly*). Seen *him?* Who?

MRS. B. Hugh Ransome. He is here!

CONST. Great Heaven! Hugh Ransome here!

MRS. B. Yes, here in this house. He saw you enter this room with Harold King, and then rushed to see me, and unburthen himself of his griefs. If you could only have heard his bitter self-reproaches you would have said the man had committed some horrible crime.

CONST. Was there nothing criminal then in his encouragement of a woman's sacred affections, only to trample upon them afterwards?

MRS. B. Criminal indeed! Of course not. *That's* an every-day affair. Men think no more now-a-days of changing sweethearts than of changing their boots.

CONST. I cannot view Hugh Ransome's treachery in any such indulgent light; (*going*) and I have no wish ever to see him again.

MRS. B. But you must see him, dear, or there will be trouble between him and Mr. King; perhaps a duel. If so, I wouldn't give ten cents for Hugh Ransome's life.

CONST. (*alarmed*). *His* life! Oh heavens! They must not meet!

MRS. B. But they have met, my dear.

CONST. (*apprehensively*). Oh unhappy woman that I am! I never thought of that.

MRS. B. But I did. You are green in that sort of business, and have no idea therefore how mean and stupid a jealous man can be. *I* know

all about it. I have been there. So I at once utilized my two inseparables—Mr. Decker and Mr. Cooke—and instructed them to keep the two rivals apart at any cost.

CONST. (*anxiously*). But will they be able to do so?

MRS. B. Will they? Oh, won't they? Two more persistent simpletons were never seen. Otherwise I never could have kept them by my side as I have done. I set Decker on to Harold King and Homer on to Hugh Ransome. The law of opposites, you see, my dear.

Enter, C., *excitedly*, HOMER *and* ABNER.

CONST. (*anxiously*). Well—well!

MRS. B. Good gracious! You haven't left those two fierce men alone together? They'll kill each other!

HOMER. I have had enough of being a peacemaker for one day.

ABNER. So have I, for all my life, and longer.

CONST. *and* MRS. B. (*together*). What has happened?

HOMER. Nothing.

CONST. *and* MRS. B. (*together*). Nothing?

HOMER. That's precisely what's the matter. You told me the two wanted to kill each other, and thinking to draw him out, I just hinted to Hugh Ransome that if he must fight Harold King, the safest method was to provoke him into a violent quarrel, and just shoot and kill him without drawing his pistol from his pocket. Well, drat me, instead of thanking me, he got indignant, and asked me if I thought he was an assassin. I tell you, there's no fight in a Yankee anywhere!

ABNER. Nor in your blustering Southerner either.

HOMER (*fiercely*). Try *me* and see if there isn't. (ABNER *glares*, MRS. B. *interferes*.)

ABNER. I thought there would be no restraining this Harold King, and I had made up my mind to privately inform the police; but first, as a feeler, I hinted that Hugh Ransome probably meant to renew his attentions to Miss Burwell, when, to my surprise, he said that if Mr. Ransome should insist upon persecuting a lady, he was *afraid* he should be compelled to interfere. Afraid! Nice talk that for a fire-eater, eh?

CONST. Where are they now?

HOMER. In the parlor where the dancing is going on.

ABNER. Glaring at each other. (*mimicing them.*)

CONST. Oh, dear Mrs. Barbour, please go keep them apart. Send Mr. Ransome to me at once, here, and engage Harold King in conversation. Lose not a moment! Quick!

MRS. B. I understand. (*going*) Oh, you men! you men! I believe you were created on purpose to vex and torment us poor women!

[*Exit*, C.

HOMER (*in front, not observing her exit*). That's a dig at you, sir!

ABNER. She meant every word of it for *you*, sir. Didn't you, Mrs. Barbour? (*turning, notices her absence.*)

[*Exit, followed by* HOMER, C.

CONST. Hugh Ransome here! Have I miscalculated my strength, or is this emotion the expiring throb of the feeling which once bound me to him? At the mention of his presence there flitted into my heart the ghost of a long stifled pain—a remembered resentment, only half-checked by a wild relentful regret; a regret like the plaintive appeal of a motherless child softly entreating admission to the heart which resists its entrance. Ah!

Enter, C., *quickly*, HUGH RANSOME. *Her manner instantly changes.*

HUGH. You did me the honor to request my presence here. (*offering his hand.*).

CONST. (*gaily, curtseying*). Ah, Mr. Ransome! Welcome to Washington. Your presence, though opportune, is a surprise. Of course you have brought your betrothed with you? What is her name? Ah, Miss Lulu Osborne. Of course she dances bewitchingly? You were always fastidious in matters of personal grace.

HUGH (*gravely*). I did not bring Miss Osborne with me; nor am I minded to dance.

CONST. No? Why, then, what brings you here? Not office-seeking, I hope. There are now a thousand applicants for every vacant post. Nor in the interest of the lobby. The honesty of the average member of Congress is something perfectly awful in its grandeur. Ha, ha, ha!

HUGH. Is it possible that you have forgotten that you demanded from me the return of your letters?

CONST. (*laughing*). Pardon the dereliction, but I really had forgotten. It will be a source of constant regret to me if, through any misunderstanding of my request, you have put yourself to the inconvenience of bringing them in person, when you might just as well have sent them by mail.

HUGH. I counted no inconvenience too great to manifest my respect for your command.

CONST. (*sarcastic*). Oh, you are very kind!

HUGH (*giving package of letters tied with ribbon*). You will find them all here.

CONST. (*curtseying low*). Thanks. (*aside*) He has kept the portrait!

HUGH (*coldly*). All is now over between us, I presume. I may date my freedom from to-day.

CONST. (*sarcastic*). Indeed! From the reports of your engagement to Miss Osborne, I thought you long since held your "freedom" wholly unfettered. I could not flatter myself that you had rested content in *my* chains till now.

HUGH (*deprecatingly*). I did not so mean it. The only chains of yours I ever felt, were chains of flowers. They would have proven as hooks of steel, had I thought my love returned.

CONST. (*laughing*). A very wise and proper doubt. 'Tis evident in questioning your constancy I have dealt unjustly with your prudence.

HUGH. For Heaven's sake spare me your sarcasms. Has this final parting no sadness in it for you?

CONST. Sadness! Ha, ha, ha! What for? Certainly not for so ordinary occurrence as broken faith or shattered trust. Oh no, no! In the wide waste of life *that* is too petty a thing to claim more than a passing thought—a pitying smile!

HUGH (*painfully surprised at her tone*). Yet those letters breathed a different sentiment when you wrote them.

CONST. Did they? Ah, fond and trusting simpleton that I was! Ha, ha, ha! Who think you would write, as all do, to the objects of their fancy, could they foresee the end of their little heart-romances? But oh no! We all believe the vows, which then we plight, to be eternal! Ha, ha, ha! *Others* have awakened to rude and cruel disappointment, it is true. Ah, they never loved truly! But we—oh *we* are the happy exceptions to the rule. Ha, ha, ha! The error is pardonable, though common; the variety beautiful, though trite. Shall we then blame it because you and I survive it? Never! Never! Ha, ha, ha!

HUGH. Yesterday I would have scarcely contradicted you; to-day your words fall as heavily upon my heart as clods of earth upon the coffin of one loved and lost. I will not quarrel with your laughter, though I feel how impossible 'tis for me to lift, without emotion, from the face of our dead past the pall which covers also the fondest illusions of youth, hope, and love.

CONST. (*sarcastically*). Your reproof is generous—very! But really, did you expect to find me ill over your—*withdrawal* from my "fetters"; lean with regret; pallid with suffering, and shriveled up with despair? Ha, ha, ha! If so, I am very sorry for your disappointment. (*curtseying*) Ha, ha, ha!

HUGH (*bitterly*). I am glad to find, Miss Burwell, that it costs you no pain to give me up.

CONST. None whatever. Ha, ha, ha! There are hearts which cling in life to one faith long after its shrine has been shattered, and which die when its faith has perished. But those are instances which exist, I fear, only in the pages of romance, or in the seldom-written annals of broken-hearted women.

HUGH. They slander, then, who say that woman's heart changes lightly?

CONST. Of course they do! Accusations against woman's constancy are uttered chiefly by poets, themselves the least constant of human kind. But we are extending this discussion. We women are but slaves of society, you know, and dare not disregard the duties which society imposes upon us; the duty of subordinating the heart to society—of holding worldly wisdom superior to romance.

HUGH. Worldly wisdom *may* grow out of experience; but youth is born only of feeling.

CONST. (*tantalizingly*). Rash man! Beware how you utter such heresy in the ears of society!

HUGH. For pity's sake cease your mockings. Every word you utter is like a stab to my heart! Think you I suffer no pain in this separation? And yet, while it requires all the strength of my manhood to repress the cries I dare not utter, you can speak of separation only to laugh at it!

CONST. (*with flash of scorn*). And is that your thought? You see in *your* agitation only the heroism of love—a love which surrenders all it would die to retain, and yet loves on! You read in my—calmness, only the indifference of an inconstant nature, and in *your* suffering the endurance of a martyr! Ha, ha, ha, ha! This is the very apotheosis of self-love.

HUGH. Of self-love?

CONST. (*bitterly*). Yes; a self-love which could deliberately wreck all the fond hopes centred upon you, yet when touched by an apprehended loss of the love it had rejected, would now feign an emotion it long since ceased to feel!

HUGH. Feign! By Heaven, you wrong me!

CONST. I speak truly. You are wounded, not because I bleed, but because you do not see my suffering; because instead of springing to clasp your hand in pained appeal, I recede from your approach with indifference. You would be better pleased could you awaken in my heart that Past, which flattered your vanity while it assailed my peace; could you regain once more, once more to fling away, the love your truth had failed to keep! But, (*with curtsey*) pardon me, Mr. Ransome, no utterances of mine can ever enable you to know me as I am. The chasm

which separates us is too wide and deep to be bridged by words! And so let us shake hands and part—as friends!

HUGH. No, no! You have misjudged me! I realize now how precious, how peerless is the love I might have worn, jewel-like, upon my heart! I *feel* the wrong I did you—the wrong I did myself, and am prepared to repair with all my future the error of the past!

CONST. What mean you?

HUGH. I mean that, condemned without a hearing, banished without regret, I yet return to regain the place in your heart I had thoughtlessly vacated. I find it barred against me by one whom your smile honors far beyond his worth. But I will not be thus ousted by a trickster. I will——

CONST. A trickster! Of whom speak you?

HUGH. Of Harold King, who——

CONST. For shame! Is this your idea of manhood? First to sport with the faith of a trusting woman, and then insult the friend who would rescue her from the depths of your betrayal! Hugh Ransome, there remains to be said between us but one word more. (*firmly*) Farewell! (*suddenly changing from grave to gay*) Be assured I no more retain you in my fetters. Ha, ha, ha! (*turning away.*)

HUGH. And is it thus we part? Then so be it! I leave you free to wed another. But his love can bring you no joy that my heart will not already have invoked for you. Adieu! [*Rushes out,* C.

CONST. (*staggers and grasps chair for support*). He is gone! Back to the world, and I am left alone! (*looking at letters*) What use now are these fond records of faded dreams—of passionate hopes, which mock at despair—life's lost blossoms, withered in their bloom—memorials only of decay and death? Gone! All gone! Nothing for me now but vain regrets—tears, ceaseless tears! (*falls on tete-a-tete and buries her face, sobbing in her hands.*)

Re-enter, C., HUGH, *with portrait.*

HUGH. I had forgotten your portrait. (*she springs up*) What! in tears, Constance?

CONST. (*laughing*). In tears! Ha, ha, ha! Why should I weep? That you never once praised the toilet upon which I spent hours of serious thought? Nor even once repeated the trite but pretty compliments with which, on former days—before you escaped from my "fetters"—you praised the eloquence of my eyes, the music of my voice, the grace of my every movement? Ha, ha, ha! These omissions are enough, I grant you, to drive many women to despair; but, you see, I bear *my* deprivations not only without tears, but—Ha, ha, ha!—even with laughter. (*waltz music heard*) Ah, there is the music, and I am pledged to Harold King for the next waltz. (*moving gaily back, she staggers, grasps sofa for support, and by a desperate effort forces herself to smile.*)

Enter, C., *quickly and excitedly,* HAROLD. *Checks himself at* C. D. *and stands gloomily with folded arms.*

HUGH (*advancing to her*). Great Heavens! You suffer! I have deceived myself then.

HAROLD (*advancing between them*). No! You have deceived *her,* and for that deceit you shall answer to *me!*

HUGH (*eagerly*). With all my heart, sir, whenever and wherever you please! (CONSTANCE *with a shriek springs between them.*)

CONST. Oh no, gentlemen!—not that, I entreat you!—not that!

Enter, C., *quickly*, MRS. B., KATE, AUSTIN, FRANK, ABNER, *and* HOMER.

OMNES. What is the matter?

CONST. (*with forced composure*). Oh nothing; the heat of the room momentarily affected me; that is all. Your arm, Mr. King. (*takes his arm, and in an intense whisper, aside to him*) Not another word! For *my* sake! (*aloud, gaily*) Come; we shall be late for the waltz. Mr. Ransome (*with low curtsey*) once more——

HUGH (*advancing with extended hand*). Once more, Good-bye!

CONST. (*at door, impressively*). No, not good-bye, but—Farewell! (*curtsey. Waltz, forte. Picture.*

MODERATE CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Same as before. The next morning. Music.*

Enter, C., KATE *and* LULU OSBORNE, *the latter in travelling costume.*

KATE. What a lovely surprise, Lulu. New York must be awfully dull without you.

LULU. My coming is nothing unusual, Kate. Papa brings me to Washington every winter. He has so many interests at stake, you know—steamship lines and iron mines——

KATE (*interrupting*). Oh! that's a rhyme—"steamship lines and iron mines." Beautiful!

LULU. And papa says members of Congress are not to be trusted out of sight.

KATE (*gravely*). I have heard the same thing before. They say few members of Congress are to be trusted unless you "see" them.

LULU (*reproringly*). Ah, Kate, that is slang.

KATE (*gravely*). And how did *you* come to learn it then?

LULU (*gaily*). At the dear old Packer Institute. It used to make the professors green with rage to hear it; but we always looked as demure as—as wet umbrellas, and declared we didn't mean it in that light.

KATE (*laughing*). And so did we at Vassar. It was awfully funny, one day, when, after an unusually dull lesson on the lunar influences, one of the girls told Professor Roberts to "shoot the moon!" Ha, ha, ha! (*both girls laugh heartily*) The professor tumbled over in a dead faint—ha, ha, ha!—had to be carried to a lounge, and have ice put to the back of his head. Ha, ha, ha! He found out the culprit, and gave her an awful report, though 'twas Belle Dupuy, and he was "mashed" on her. Ha, ha, ha!

LULU (*sighing*). All our fun ends, Kate, when we leave school.

KATE. Mine shan't, I know.

LULU. Suppose your husband objects to all "levity." That's the word, dear.

KATE (*archly*). Well, I haven't got a husband yet, and when I do get one, I shall pick out a fellow with good teeth.

LULU. Good teeth! What has that to do with it?

KATE. Very much, my dear; then he'll be all the time laughing and showing them. And I shall have a regular marriage contract, and have it there expressly set down in all the formal and awe-inspiring phrases of law, that, whereas, the said What's-his name and the said What-do-you-call-her, having solemnly determined upon uniting their differences in the holy bonds of matrimony; and, whereas laughter having been judicially pronounced a medicine of the heart by one King Solomon, it is hereby mutually agreed, that these contracting parties shall indulge in plenty of said medicine at all times and in all places, but particularly at meal time, and in the presence of all very solemn prigs and all awfully dignified big-wigs. Ha, ha, ha!

LULU. *My* lord and master, that is to be, seems now to be cheery-natured enough, but marriage changes men dreadfully.

KATE. Yes; subdues them, as it were. But confess, Lulu, that in spite of your affected ignorance, you knew of Hugh Ransome's presence at Washington, and timed your visit accordingly.

LULU. I knew nothing whatever about it—had not heard from him for over a fortnight.

KATE. Not heard from him in a fortnight!—two weeks, fourteen days, three hundred and thirty-six hours! And calls himself a lover! I insist upon *my* sweethearts writing me one note every day, Sundays included.

LULU. Sweethearts! In the plural, eh? How many have you, Kate?

KATE (*demurely*). Only two - at present.

LULU. Who is *the* man?

KATE. Now you won't tell, will you? Mind, this is in the strictest confidence. Austin Brookes, a young Virginian, with plenty of money, and awfully jealous.

LULU (*gravely*). That's bad; jealous lovers may make good *masters*, but not good husbands

KATE. There can be no love without jealousy. Honestly, aren't you jealous of Mr. Ransome?

LULU. No!

KATE. Not in the slightest degree, ever so little, the tiniest bit?

LULU. Not in the least.

KATE. Then you don't love him. You can't humbug me with *that* sort of nonsense.

LULU. It is all a matter of temperament. Are you engaged to this Mr. Brookes?

KATE (*pouting*). No-o. That is, I think not. Of course we've both talked a whole lot of the usual nonsense about being born for each other, and dying if we can't get each other, etcetera; but nothing definite has been settled yet. Mamma says we are too young to marry.

LULU. Well, she ought to know.

KATE. Yes; considering that she ran away with pa, and married him, before she was seventeen. (*pouting*) But that's the way with old folks generally. They say to us young folks, "Oh, (*hands uplifted*) you mustn't do *that*; it won't be proper, you know," and put on such pious airs that no one would ever suspect *them* of knowing "how it is yourself," you know. Yet there are very few of the naughty-nice things of life which these blessed old saints haven't had their share of; yes, and more too.

LULU (*laughing*). They would be bad advisers if deficient in experience. Who is the other lover?

KATE. Mr.—stop awhile; I've got to think of his name. Oh, Frank Powers, of New York—a friend of your Mr. Ransome.

LULU (*laughing*). Not know the name of your lover? Oh Kate!

KATE (*innocently*). Well, I never met him in all my life till last night; (*brightening*) and names don't amount to much anyway, unless you're going to be married to one; *then* they are very important.

LULU. This is a case of love at first sight, then?

KATE. Certainly—on *his* side. That is the only way the genuine article comes. The second-sight kind is all make-believe.

LULU. Juliet was Romeo's second love, and Mr. Ransome tells me *I* am *his* second; yet I know he loves me better than his first, whoever *she* may have been.

KATE (*seriously*). Well, now, don't you bet on that, child. (*brightening*) Mr. What's his-name danced three sets with me in succession, and oh my! wasn't Austin jealous! Ha, ha, ha!

LULU. *You* evidently enjoyed it?

KATE. Of course I did. It shows that a girl is of some importance when the fellows get to wrangling about her. I'd give the world if some of them would only get up a duel about me.

LULU (*shocked*). A duel! Oh Kate!

KATE. Yes, a duel! They needn't fight, you know; very few duels result in that. There is either an "amicable adjustment," or the police interfere, or something of that sort. Why, I know ladies—real tip-top society ladies—who would like to have their lovers scalped, just for the notoriety of the thing.

LULU (*shocked*). Oh! Well, but only Indians do that.

KATE. Ha, ha, ha! Oh, how awfully "fresh" you are! and you a New York girl too. My dear child, don't make the mistake of thinking that the only savages in this great and glorious country dwell among the lava-beds of the Far West. I have seen lots of them here in the private parlors of Washington.

LULU. Savages in Washington!

KATE. Right you are. Only they wear dress coats and white neckties, and kill with slanderous tongues, instead of tomahawks and scalping knives.

LULU (*laughingly*). And how do you like Mr. What-do-you-call-him Powers?

KATE. Very much, and that notwithstanding he is a Northern man.

LULU. Well, is that a personal disqualification hereabouts?

KATE. W-e-ll, it isn't really; but society in Washington is divided into North and South by a sort of social Mason and Dixon's line. I'm a Virginian, you know, and so, of course, I'm on the Dixie side of the line. (*looks around*) Sh! Here comes Austin! (*with suppressed giggle*) In the sulks yet. See me cure him.

Enter, C. D., *slowly and sullenly*, AUSTIN. KATE *affects not to see him.*

Well, as I was saying, we had a perectly lovely time. I danced three sets with Mr.——

AUSTIN. Good-morning, Miss Barbour.

KATE (*frigidly, scarcely turning around*). Good-morning, *Mister* Brookes. (*resuming conversation*) Three sets with Mr.——

AUSTIN. I wanted to speak to you, but as I find you are not alone——

KATE (*coldly introducing her*). This is my friend, Miss Lulu Osborne. Mr. Austin Brookes, Lulu. (*winking*) Three sets with Mr.——

AUSTIN. Will you be alone this evening, Miss Barbour?

KATE. Possibly yes—possibly no. Anything very particular?

AUSTIN. N-o-o! I——

KATE (*indifferently*). Oh well, as I was saying, I danced three sets with Mr.——

AUSTIN. I hope you enjoyed the hop last night?

KATE (*with affected enthusiasm*). Oh, very much—had a charming time. (*speaking rapidly to escape apprehended interruption*) Danced three times with Mr.—Mr.—(*aside to* LULU) Good gracious, what's his name?

LULU (*aside to* KATE, *in whisper*) Powers!

KATE (*continuing*). With Mr. Bowers—a most delightful partner—(*winking at* LULU) so very graceful, and so very cheerful. That, you know, is everything. I hate sulky people.

AUSTIN (*resentfully*). Indeed!

KATE (*innocently*). Yes; don't you?

AUSTIN (*resentful tone*). That being the case, Mr. Powers having been so graceful, and so cheerful. I am sorry now I didn't resign my *little* share of your attention, and so have afforded you a more extended opportunity for enjoyment. I—I—Good-morning, ladies.

[*Exit*, C. D., *in jealous rage, suppressed.* KATE *falls into seat, laughing heartily.*

LULU. Now he has gone off mad! You acted unwisely, Kate.

KATE. Not a bit of it. It's all right. I've got him now just where I wanted him. Ha, ha, ha! Come on the balcony, dear. Mr. Powers will see me, and be certain to join us, and then my jealous cavalier will come flying to my side again. Oh, I know all about it, dear. I've tried it before. [*Exit* KATE *and* LULU, C., *laughing.*

Enter, R. 1 E., HUGH *and* FRANK.

FRANK. You went too far last night, Hugh. I only wonder that so confirmed a fire-eater as Harold King has not challenged you.

HUGH. And if he should, I would accept it and fight him on his own terms.

FRANK. And be killed for your recklessness.

HUGH. I care not. Death has no terrors for me. Life has now become the suicide of Hope. There is but one happy life for me. The pathway to that is illumined only by *her* love!

FRANK (*sighing*). Ah! I wish I could talk of love in that way, Hugh.

HUGH. You have only to feel the passion to find its voice. Youth needs no interpreter. But pardon my selfish blindness. Are you in trouble? You seem depressed.

FRANK (*sighing*). Yes. I had a heavy tumble last night.

HUGH (*anxiously*). A tumble! Did you hurt yourself much?

FRANK. Oh, I don't mean that kind of a tumble. I tumbled in love last night, with one of the brightest and sweetest little angels I ever met!

HUGH. Oh! Ha, ha, ha! What is her name?

FRANK. Kate Barbour. Lovely name, isn't it? I can see but one objection; she is a Southern girl, though residing in Washington, and——

HUGH. And is of course opposed to a union with the North, or rather with a Northern man. Is that it?

FRANK. Not exactly. But it begins to look as though the North and South may come to blows, and (*hesitatingly*) in that case—it would be—rather unpleasant, you know, to have—a——

HUGH. To have a Southern wife. I see.

FRANK. No; to have a Southern mother-in-law. (*looking off*) By Jove! There she is on the balcony. Excuse me. (*runs out.*)

HUGH. I *must* win her back! 'Tis vain to reason with the heart. I love her, and all the rest is as nothing to me!

Enter, C. D., *quickly*, CONSTANCE.

CONST. I was seeking you! You must leave here—must go away from Washington at once!

HUGH (*coolly*). At whose bidding, pray?

CONST. At mine!

HUGH. And is my presence then hateful to *you?*

CONST. No, no! Not that. But—but—Oh, if you value your life you *must* leave!

HUGH. My life! Ah, you dread the anger of Harold King!

CONST. I meant not that. But if you have any regard for my peace—have yet one wish to atone for the years of suffering you imposed upon me, then, by *that* wish, I implore you to leave this city at once. (*he shakes his head negatively*) For my sake!

HUGH (*quickly turning to her*). For *your* sake. Constance, I will remain! My pride fights in vain with truth, and at your feet I humble head and heart! Pardon the error of the past, and restore me with your mercy the golden promise of love's future. I beseech this by more of passion than prayer ever breathed! By the rights I have over you——

CONST. Rights! and over *me!*

HUGH. Yes, over you! For what greater right *could* belong to a man than the right to repair in the future, the wrongs of the past?

CONST. You forget, sir, that your hand and honor are pledged to another.

HUGH. I forget nothing! My honor will live wherever love can live unstained. Poor *honor* indeed were it, to give to another, the life of which you hold the key.

CONST. And have I not always held it, then? You told me I did, years ago. Yet, when absence, or worse still, self-interest, applied its test to your sincerity, you forgot *your* troth, *my* peace, and flung away the key to your life! Threw away, at the same time, the heart you had nearly broken—thrust away from your lips, untasted, the libations of all my life and all my love! Yet you speak now, as if in one instant, with a few words, passionately uttered, you could restore the broken visions of rapturous youth, or brush from the soul of Love the dust which years of disappointment and despair had gathered there!

HUGH. I deserve all your reproaches. The crime of all my existence was to have known you in vain! The duty most sacred to truth, most hallowed by honor, is that which has led me to your feet! Speak, and restore me the blessing I had thought forever lost—*your* love!

CONST. In spite of all, I listen to you with a joy I cannot disguise! Rest is sweet after strife; and I have striven so hard to forget all you now ask me to remember. My heart is like a storm-beaten ark, wildly hurled over the whirlpool of Time. The dove flew wearily from my bosom many, many years ago, and returns not yet. Heaven only knows what rainbow may lift the promise of hope above the clouds of despair;

but your voice, Hugh, sounds now to my listening heart like the prelude of a new and yearned for dawn!

HUGH (*ardently*). Heaven bless you for those sweet words, which only upon tears could have arisen.

CONST. (*gravely*). First hear me through. The question for my conscience to determine is a serious one. I have burnt out within me the fuel of love; can I ever again renew its flame? Can the dead flowers of fancy and passion ever find their bloom and their fragrance again?

HUGH (*ardently*). Yes, yes! Let my love be the prophet of your fears!

Enter, L. 1 E., *quickly*, FRANK. *He salutes* CONSTANCE.

FRANK (*gravely*). Are you engaged, Hugh? Will you excuse me, Miss Burwell? I want only to say one word to him in private.

CONST. Certainly. (*turns away.* FRANK *and* HUGH *converse earnestly apart, up stage.*)

Enter, C. D., *quickly*, MRS. BARBOUR.

MRS. B. (*seriously, in intense whisper*). I have been looking for you all over the hotel!

CONST. (*anxiously*). What has happened?

MRS. B. (*apart to her*). Something awful. Harold King has challenged Hugh Ransome!

CONST. Oh Heavens! I dreaded this.

MRS. B. (*looking towards* HUGH). Sh! He doesn't know it yet. 'Tis only by accident I found it out. Mr. King being a stranger in Washington, had no *friend* to act for him, so he had to take Homer Cooke, who is as vain of the office as if he were second to a marriage instead of a murder. (CONSTANCE *shudders at the word.*)

CONST. (*with tender glance at* HUGH). What is to be done? This duel must be prevented at any cost. If they meet, Harold King will kill him! I know his fatal skill, and his cruel purpose!

MRS. B. Well, in the first place, we must prevent the delivery of the challenge. *I* will attend to *that.*

CONST. (*anxiously*). But can you do it?

MRS. B. My dear, there is no telling what a woman *can't* do with a fool like Homer Cooke. Meantime you must see Harold, and induce him to withdraw the challenge.

CONST. I will try. But not one word of this to Hugh Ransome. His pride would rebel against any attempt to save his life at the expense of what he may conceive to be his honor.

MRS. B. Trust me for that. But be quick to see Harold; I will lay in wait for Homer Cooke. I'll pick his pocket but that I'll get the challenge that he bears.

CONST. (*going, aside*). And I was beginning to hope again. Heaven grant that what I have sown in bitter tears I may one day reap in happy smiles. [*Exit*, C. MRS. B. R. 1 E. HUGH *and* FRANK *advance.*

HUGH. You did wrong to strike Mr. Brookes, and in the presence of ladies too

FRANK. I know it. I was a darned fool! All lovers *are*—present company excepted. But he was so exasperating—called me "a demmed Yankee."

HUGH. Well, you are not ashamed of the name, I hope?

FRANK. Certainly not. But I'm *not* a Yankee, you know. I was born in Connecticut, not down East.

HUGH. Of course he'll challenge you.

FRANK (*lugubriously*). Oh, of course he will, the jealous ass.

HUGH. Of course you will fight him?

FRANK. Of course I won't! No, sir, not if I can help it; I'm no fire-eater. Besides, I am opposed to dueling on moral grounds.

HUGH. So am I. But there are many things which, though my conscience can't approve, society compels me to accept. Capital punishment, for instance, and dueling.

FRANK. Well, I think it barbarous, and all who practice dueling no better than savages.

HUGH. There are two sides to that question. Even so wise and good a man as Dr. Samuel Johnson declared that it was impossible to condemn harshly any man who set his honor above his life.

FRANK. Oh, Sam Johnson be blowed, the literary bully!

Enter, C. D., HOMER, *very pompously and formal.* MRS. BARBOUR *runs in from* R. 1 E., *and meets him.*

HUGH (*seeing* HOMER). Sh! (*converses apart with* FRANK.)

MRS. B. (*pulling her arm within* HOMER'S, *and trying to withdraw him*). My dear Mr. Cooke, I have been seeking you everywhere.

HOMER (*very pompously, looking over toward* FRANK). Will you excuse me for five minutes? I have a most delicate and (*ominously*) important mission to attend to.

MRS B (*affectionately*). So have I, and I *must* have your assistance in it. I won't listen to a refusal. What! *you* a Southern gentleman, and yet ungallant? (*draws him aside, fondly holding his lappel. He smilingly relents. After some maneuvering she is seen to abstract the challenge from one of his pockets*) Meantime——

Enter, C. D., *very pompously*, ABNER.

FRANK (*cordially*). Ah, Decker, how are you?

ABNER (*bowing coldly*). Sir, I am the bearer of a private note from my friend, Mr. Austin Brookes.

FRANK (*wilting, unobserved. Aside*) Oh Lord! (*taking offered note very gingerly, opens and glances over it*) He has challenged me! (*aside to* HUGH) You know the purport of this note? (*to* ABNER, *who bows*) Well, p-please say to Mr. Brookes that I am very sorry, but——

HUGH (*selling him quietly aside and advancing*). My friend is sorry to violate the laws against dueling, but since Mr. Brookes has done him the honor of challenging, he will find great pleasure in meeting him at the first opportunity.

FRANK (*blustering*). The very first opportunity, sir; the sooner the better. My friend Ransome will attend to all the necessary details, sir, such as time, and place, and weapons, and coffins. Yes, sir, coffins; for of course this will be a duel to the death!

ABNER (*bowing*). Very well, sir. We shall be delighted. (*aside*) Durn my hat! I thought he was opposed to dueling. Why, he's a perfect fire-eater! (FRANK *struts up and down stage.* HUGH *and* ABNER *converse apart.*

HUGH. You shall have our formal reply within an hour.

HOMER (*feeling for letter*). I am very sorry, Mrs. Barbour, but business before pleasure. (*approaching* HUGH) Ahem! Mr. Hugh Ransome, I believe?

HUGH (*advancing*). That is my name, sir.

HOMER (*formally*). I have the honor, sir, (*feeling pockets*) as the

friend of my friend, Mr. Harold King, to deliver you this confidential note. (*feeling for it*) Where the devil is it?

HUGH. I expected it, sir, and shall be happy to receive it.

HOMER (*hurriedly examining his pockets*). Thank you. I must apologize for presenting it here; but I couldn't find you in your room, and—and—Strange! I certainly had it when I entered this parlor. (*looking over the floor.*)

MRS. B. (*sympathetically*). What is the matter?—have you lost something?

HOMER (*searching floor*). Yes, a note.

ABNER. Was it endorsed?

HOMER (*indignant*). It was not a note of hand, sir, but——

MRS. B. (*with affected jealousy*). Not a note of the heart—not a love-note, I hope!

HOMER (*quickly*). No, ma'am—no, ma'am!

ABNER. *Those* are too scarce for you to lose even one of 'em, eh?

HOMER (*fiercely*). Sir! I—that is to say, you——

HUGH. Oh, never mind it now, sir. You can easily procure a duplicate. Meantime say to your friend that I will waive all formalities in my desire to meet his wishes half way. I shall await you in my room for the rest of the afternoon. (*bows*) Come, Powers.

Exit C., *followed heroically by* FRANK.

HOMER (*still looking about room, suspiciously*). A very strange loss, that!

MRS. B. (*laughing*). Are you quite certain you had it? (*showing note to audience unobserved by others.*)

HOMER. Quite. I started from King's room with it scarcely half an hour ago.

ABNER (*suspiciously*). Did you stop anywhere on the way—in the bar-room, for instance?

HOMER (*indignant*). Sir! Your insinuation is insulting, and I will hold you to account for it.

ABNER. All right. Oh, you can't frighten me with your vaporings.

HOMER (*contemptuously*). Frighten *you!* I wouldn't waste powder on such game as you.

ABNER. I want you to understand that I *am* "game" too, to the back tooth, sir!

HOMER. You shall be put to the test, sir. Insolent Yankee!

ABNER. Do it if you dare! Blustering disunionist!

HOMER. Dare! To *me!* Enough. No more words. Let us have deeds now. (*starting up stage*) Come on!

ABNER (*following him*). All right. Come on!

MRS. B. (*seizing each by the coat-tail*). You shall *not* go, gentlemen. You shall not! There will be bloodshed!

HOMER. Of course there will be—buckets full of blood! He has brought it all on himself. He has voluntarily sought death by abusing me, and through me, the social dignity, the civic grandeur, the constistitutional rights of my native South. Come on! (*trying to break away.*)

ABNER (*struggling to release himself*). I am ready and willing. You have provoked an untimely death by sneering at the courage, the virtue, and the superior intelligence of the free and independent North, all of which are personified in me! Let me go, Adelgitha. I am desperate! (*struggling.*)

HOMER. So am I. Don't hold me, dear Mrs. Barbour; you only make matters worse. Besides, you may tear my coat.

MRS. B. No, you shall not go! You shall not fight! (*shrieks.*)

Enter, C. D., *quickly*, KATE *and* AUSTIN.

KATE *and* AUSTIN (*together*). What is the matter?

MRS. B. Help me to hold them; they are going to fight a duel!

HOMER *and* ABNER (*together*). Will you let us go, or not?

AUSTIN. Certainly, if you will both sacredly promise to fight.

HOMER *and* ABNER (*together*). We do—we do!

AUSTIN. Release them, Mrs. Barbour. (*she does so*) There. The cars start for Bladensburg at twelve. Or, if you prefer it, you can quietly blaze away at each other in the fifty-foot lot at the back of my office.

HOMER. Agreed! That suits me.

ABNER. And me too.

AUSTIN. Which proposition do you prefer?

HOMER *and* ABNER (*together*). Both! Both of 'em, sir.

HOMER (*starting*). Come on!

ABNER (*starting*). The sooner the better!

KATE (*aside to him*). Oh, stop them, Austin. They are desperate.

HOMER. Stop! Now that I think of it, as this combat is likely to prove fatal to one of us——

ABNER. Fatal to one or both of us.

HOMER (*gulping*). It occurs to me that I had better make my will first.

ABNER (*readily*). Certainly. That's wise. Make your will before you die, sir.

HOMER. I have a great deal of real estate to dispose of——

ABNER. And I a large amount of four-per-cent. bonds——

HOMER. And my affairs being very complicated, I need time to straighten them out.

ABNER (*magnanimously*). Certainly, sir. Take all the time you want, *now*. Where you are going, sir, you'll have no further use for time.

HOMER (*grandly*). Very well, sir. I shall be ready for you in four weeks from to-day.

ABNER. Agreed! You may issue invitations to your funeral four weeks from to-day.

HOMER (*pompously*). Gentlemen—ladies—I salute you. (*bows gravely to them—makes contemptuous face at* ABNER) Worm! (*Exit*, C. D.

AUSTIN (*winking at* KATE). I am glad, Decker, your little affair has been put off.

ABNER (*heroically*). I am not. I wanted to have it off my hands at once.

KATE. Oh, Mr. Decker, I had no idea you were such a desperado.

AUSTIN. But you forget you have an affair of mine to arrange. You couldn't, in common fairness, die till *that* is settled, you know.

ABNER. True; I *had* forgotten. Ah, well, *that* reconciles me to the delay.

KATE (*anxiously*). What affair do you refer to, Austin? You don't mean to tell me that you have challenged that insignificant Mr. Powers?

AUSTIN (*grandly*). I do. My honor has been assailed. He struck me in the nose, before *you*, and I have challenged him to mortal combat.

KATE (*aside, gleefully*). Glorious! A duel! and all on my account. Oh, won't that be jolly.

AUSTIN. Only blood can wash out such an insult. The issue is, *his* life, or mine!

KATE (*aside, apprehensively*). Oh Lord! (*aloud, anxiously*) But perhaps he won't fight.

ABNER. Oh, won't he! He's the most unquenchable fire-eater I ever saw.

KATE. When is the fight to take place, and where?

ABNER. It isn't settled yet; but of course it will be at Bladensburg at daybreak to morrow. (KATE *starts suddenly up the stage*) Where are you going, Kate?

KATE. To tell the police! A girl has trouble enough to find a beau, without being subjected to the chance of his throwing his life away after she has has got him; so I shall simply inform the authorities.

[*She runs out*, C. D.

AUSTIN. Kate! Stop her, Decker! Kate, if you disgrace me I'll never speak to you again. Dash it, she's in earnest. Stop, Kate!

[*Runs out*, C. D.

ABNER (*following rapidly, shouting*). Head her off, Austin! This fight must not be interrupted.

MRS. B. Mr. Decker, do you know what the penalty is in this District for bearing a challenge?

ABNER (*impatient to get out*). No, ma'am; and, meaning no rudeness, I don't want to know.

MRS. B. One year's imprisonment!——

ABNER. Thunder——(*falls into seat in consternation.*)

MRS. B. And a fine of one thousand dollars!

ABNER. And lightning! [*Runs out rapidly*, R. 1 E.

[*Exit* MRS. B., L. 1 E,, *laughing.*

Enter, C., CONSTANCE *and* HAROLD.

CONST. Thank Heaven that I have found you in time! You must not fight Hugh Ransome. Do you understand?

HAROLD. I confess that I do *not* understand.

CONST. What *right* have you to set such a claim upon *my* heart as shall render the attempt of another to win it a crime deserving death? What instinct of true honor can demand the assassination of Hugh Ransome?

HAROLD (*indignant*). Assassination! You speak without thought, I trust?

CONST. Assassination is the word. *You* are skilled in the use of weapons: he is not. You by training and inclination are a duelist; he, by education and through conscience, is opposed to the practice. Yet you would play his pride against his soul, and force him into a duel, only that you may remove from your path a rival in love! I tell you, Harold King, that if this duel goes on, and you kill Hugh Ransome, no matter what the world may say of it, in the eye of God, and under your own conscience, the act will be one of deliberate murder!

HAROLD. You are mad to talk thus. He humiliated you by casting you off, and would, if he dared, supplement that wrong to you by insult to me.

CONST. He has neither humiliated me nor insulted you. You have no right therefore to demand his life.

HAROLD. Then by man's last desperate law—the law of self-defence—I will *take* the right; the right to avenge for a deceived woman her defrauded past—to secure for her an unquestioned freedom in the future!

CONST. I ask from you no championship. My wrongs, such as they are, I leave to the arbitrament of Heaven.

HAROLD. Then I shall act in behalf of my own peace, which he has assailed.

CONST. 'Tis not so. No act of his fairly menaces your peace. You palter with your conscience in making the assertion. You will compromise with crime if you bring harm to *him!*

HAROLD (*enraged*). Go not too far in your defence of Hugh Ransome! 'Tis little you care what comes to me, so you but save *his* life, to bless it with your love!

CONST. (*indignant*). Harold King! How dare you speak thus to me?

HAROLD. Because truth and right speak with my voice. You rejected my offered hand to-day, because you dared not wound his pride, and so sacrificed instead my peace! By Heaven! he shall not live to boast his triumph over my heart!

CONST. Rash man! Are you so blinded by the passion of revenge as not to see that your words threaten my honor as a woman?

HAROLD. What word of mine, I demand in the name of the purest womanhood, menaces a woman's honor?

CONST. What word? Every word you have spoken! Suppose I should permit this duel—should permit you to kill this man, whose only offence is, that he loves *me*, and afterwards wed his slayer? Would you not not feel that your name was dishonored with something more than shame, if she who bore it had been the cause of the murder?

HAROLD (*angrily*). By Heaven, you must not repeat that word!

CONST. Is there no dishonor in the smile of a woman, if men, when gazing at her, can say, "In that smile is a grave"? By all the human laws of man's heart—by all the sanctities of woman's honor—by the dread wrath of God himself, I forbid this crime!

HAROLD. Too late! I have gone too far to recede.

CONST. Then I swear to you by my every hope of heaven, that unless you recall your challenge—unless your menace against Hugh Ransome's life be withdrawn, I will never again speak to you, except to say farewell!

HAROLD (*after a pause*). And if I spare his life—this enemy who has forced himself between my heart and its happiness—you will not wed him? On your soul's peace, I demand a truthful answer.

CONST. (*evasively*). Wed him? Is he free to offer me his hand?

HAROLD. By Heaven, you evade the truth! You dare not avow what you feel. He is *not* free to wed you with honor, but he will *take* his freedom, and together, in the plenitude of your joys, you would mock at my desolation.

CONST. No, no! You wrong us in that.

HAROLD (*quickly*). Wrong *us!* Ha! Already in thought you couple him with yourself! Beware, woman, how you provoke the storm in a man's heart! Beware now you play fast and loose with a man's despair!

CONST. (*firmly*). You wrong me. Put my truth, my strength, to any test, and I will approve them to your satisfaction.

HAROLD (*quickly*). Ha! Say you so? Then I will put you to the test. Swear by your honor never to wed without my consent. (*she shrinks from him*) Ha! You shrink away from me. You are willing to sacrifice my peace, but not to jeopardize your own. I am answered. (*menacingly*) It remains now but for me to act.

CONST. Stop! You are not yet answered. One question more, ere *I* too *act*. If I pledge my soul to this cruel oath, will you too swear that you will recall your challenge, and that under no circumstances will you lift your hand against his life?

HAROLD (*firmly*). Yes. Under no circumstances will I menace Hugh

Ransome's life, unless war should arise, and we meet upon the field of battle. This I solemnly swear upon my soul—upon my honor! Is it a compact?

CONST. (*extending her hand, in intense whisper*). It is. I swear it! (*releases her hand*) Now leave me alone. (*she staggers, he springs forward and supports her with arm about her waist, ardently kissing her disengaged hand.*)

Enter, R. E., *excitedly*, HUGH.

HUGH (*aside*). Ha! In *his* arms! (*aloud, in intense suppressed anger*) I was informed, sir, you proposed sending me a personal communication. It has not yet reached me. I trust your prudence has not had the better of your passion.

CONST. (*springing forward*). Hugh!—Mr. Ransome!

HAROLD (*with forced calmness*). I understand your taunt, but (*with triumphant glance toward* CONSTANCE) can now afford to despise it. It, however, comes fitly from a man who broke his pledge to one woman, and would break it to another, did *I* permit it.

HUGH (*angered*). Did you permit it! So you arrogate to yourself authority over her actions? (*crossing excitedly to* CONSTANCE) You heard what that man says, Miss Burwell; does it cover any recent decision of yours? Does he speak with your consent—with your sanction?

CONST. (*in bated breath, standing erect and passive, with the intensity of suppressed emotion*). I—I——

HAROLD (*in whisper to her, aside*). His *life*, remember!

CONST. Oh, my God! what *can* I say? (*covers her face with hands.*)

HAROLD (*triumphantly*). Are you answered, sir?

HUGH. (*fiercely*). No, sir—not yet! The answer *I* will demand, you alone can give—if your prudence will permit.

Enter, C. D., MRS. B., FRANK, AUSTIN, KATE, LULU, HOMER, *and* ABNER. HAROLD *makes an aggressive move, but smilingly restrains himself.*

CONST. Hugh! For my sake! (*aside to* HAROLD) Take me away!

HUGH. (*apart, furiously*). She whispers to him! He has triumphed! (*seeing* LULU) Ha! Lulu. *She* at least is true. (*advances quickly, and taking* LULU'S *hand, leads her forward*) Miss Burwell, it gives me peculiar pleasure to present to you Miss Lulu Osborne, my betrothed wife! (*the two ladies curtsey.*)

CONST. (*faintly*). All is over! (*tottering.*)

LULU. She is fainting! (AUSTIN *darts forward and sustains her.*)

HAROLD (*to* HUGH, *with bated breath*). Coward!

HUGH (*furiously, striking* HAROLD *in the face with his glove*). Liar!

HAROLD (*bursting into an aggressive rage*). A blow! The dog shall die! (*darting forward, at the same time thrusting his hand into his breast pocket, as if to draw.* MRS. B., KATE, *and* LULU *shriek.*)

CONST. (*starts forward, seizing* HAROLD'S *hand*). Your oath! Remember!

Animated Tableau.

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Sitting-room in a New York hotel*—1861. *At rise of curtain military music, with drums. Shouts of a multitude.*

Enter, C., AUSTIN, *in travelling costume, glancing over "Extra."*

AUSTIN. By Jove! The attack on Sumter has aroused the entire North. Their wrath is certainly grand, and I admire it. Since we *must* fight, I am glad we are to have a foeman worthy of our steel.

Enter, L. 1 E., KATE.

KATE (*with extended hands*). Welcome back to America! I wish I could say to the *United* States.

AUSTIN. I don't wish anything of the kind. The two sections have been shaking fists at each other for over fifty years; fighting is now in order.

KATE. Oh, well, of course there will be *some* fighting, but not much.

AUSTIN (*gravely*). Well, I think there *will* be. People as brave as ours, both North and South, haven't rolled up their cuffs merely for the excitement of turning them down again. My own impression is, that the war will be very desperate, and the fighting such as the world will sicken to hear of.

KATE. And that is why you hastened back from Europe?

AUSTIN. Certainly. I should despise myself if I shirked my duty now, so have returned expressly to cast my lot with the South, and stand or fall in her defence.

KATE (*impulsively offering her hand*). You noble fellow! You may kiss me for that speech!

AUSTIN. With all my heart. (*kisses her.*)

Enter, C., *quickly*, FRANK. *He starts back, surprised.*

FRANK. Excuse me; I am very near-sighted, you know. (*recognizing him*) What! my old-time rival and antagonist. (*shaking hands heartily*) I am glad to see you. Kiss her again. You have my consent.

KATE (*laughingly recedes*). You are very liberal in giving away what is not your own.

FRANK. Certainly. And I particularly commend to you, Brookes, the adage which bids us never look a gift horse in the mouth.

KATE (*affecting to be offended*). Gift horse! *Me!* I should like to see any one attempt to look into *my* mouth.

FRANK. Got over all my nonsense, Brookes, after that affair of ours a year ago; and I'm too much occupied in national affairs now to think of anything else. By the way, I suppose you are back to do your duty? I won't ask on which side.

AUSTIN. Oh, you needn't hesitate. This is a sectional war. I shall fight, if fight I must, under the banner of my mother State, grand old Virginia.

FRANK. And *I* under the banner of Right and Justice, the banner of the Union.

AUSTIN. We of the South, descendants of those grand old rebels who established the principle that the consent of the governed is necessary to the government, believe that both right and justice are on our side.

FRANK. That's a delusion we will have to cure you of. We've got five men to three, and we mean business.

AUSTIN. We would be degenerate sons of noble sires, did we stop to count odds where liberty is involved. We can but oppose your convictions with our own, and give to your great power, should God bless you with success, the protest of our dead bodies.

Enter, C. D., *quickly*, MRS. B. *Shakes hands cordially with* AUSTIN.

MRS. B. I heard you were here, and came down expressly to see you, without completing my toilet. (*shakes hands also with* FRANK.)

KATE. *That's* a compliment for you. Ha, ha, ha!

MRS. B. But you mustn't look at me critically. I am looking like a fright, I know, but the prevailing excitement has made me ill.

AUSTIN. Not with apprehension, I hope?

MRS. B. (*proudly*). No indeed. I know the valor of the South too well to insult it with one doubt of the result. Of course *we* shall conquer.

FRANK. Well, war, like law, is mighty uncertain, Mrs. Barbour; so much depends, you know, on the "sinews."

KATE. Only think, our friend here was the first man in his regiment to volunteer against us.

FRANK. No, you pay me too much honor. Hugh Ransome was first, I second. He is colonel of the regiment, I only a captain.

AUSTIN (*shaking his hand*). I honor your spirit, Captain. When do you start South?

FRANK. This afternoon.

AUSTIN. So do I.

FRANK (*slyly to* AUSTIN). Maybe we'll have a chance to have that interrupted fight of ours out, without the interruption of the police. (*glances at* KATE.)

AUSTIN (*laughingly*). I hope not.

FRANK. Of course you go South, Mrs. Barbour?

MRS. B. Of course. I but delayed to dispose of my property in Washington and this city. That is all settled, and we start to-morrow.

KATE. Yes. Harold King tells us that all the Southern ports are to be blockaded, and I wouldn't for the world be shut out from the South.

AUSTIN (*surprised*). Is Harold King in New York?

KATE. Yes, in this hotel. So is Constance Burwell, who only recently returned from Baltimore, and, (*with concealed sneer*) of course, Mr. Hugh Ransome.

AUSTIN. Are they married?

KATE. Who?

AUSTIN. Ransome and Miss Burwell.

KATE. Of course not; but he hangs around her from morning till night, with as much assiduity as when he was her acknowledged suitor. I wonder Constance permits it; and I am sure if *I* was Lulu Ransome, *I* wouldn't stand such carryings on.

FRANK. Well, she doesn't, it seems, for, if common reports are to be believed, Harold King's attentions fully compensate for her husband's neglect.

KATE (*with heat*). Well, common reports are *not* to be believed, and you ought to know it, Frank Powers. Lulu Ransome is a good woman and a true wife, and I don't care who says to the contrary.

MRS. B. (*calmly*). Well, there is no occasion to lose your temper,

dear. Lulu Ransome may be a very good woman, but she is certainly indiscreet in admitting Harold King to so close an intimacy with her.

AUSTIN. I thought King and Ransome were bitter foes.

FRANK. Oh, that was a year ago. They are all right now, though ill-natured people, and there are lots of those in this world, you know, will persist in saying that if Ransome does not look out, he will lose through his confidence, all the eclat which in his affair with King he gained through his pluck.

AUSTIN. In plainer words, that is equivalent to saying that Harold King failing to conquer the husband, will corrupt the wife?

FRANK (*drily*). Well, that's about the shape of it.

AUSTIN (*thoughtfully*). I am sorry to hear it. But surely the scoundrel has not touched Miss Burwell's name?

MRS. B. Oh no! Far from it. Constance Burwell is the idol of society, and could marry the pick of the land, if she desired to wed, but she has refused every offer, and declares that she will never marry.

AUSTIN. That is bad for Harold King, who loved her desperately once.

KATE. And does yet, if the truth could be known. The feeling certainly isn't reciprocated; she shuns him as though she hated him. (*roll of drums and shouts heard.*)

Enter, R. *and* L., *separately*, HOMER *and* ABNER, *much excited.*

HOMER *and* ABNER (*together*). Such news! (*each has an "Extra."*)

OMNES. What is it? What is it?

ABNER (*shaking his paper triumphantly*). President Lincoln has called for 75,000 men to defend the capital!

FRANK. Hurrah! Every true man must now stand by the flag!

HOMER. Which flag?

FRANK. The true flag—the old flag, of course.

ABNER. Yes, sir! Down with each new flag; none but the true flag, the red, white, and blue flag! That's the talk. Whoop!

HOMER. That's exactly what it will all amount to—talk!

ABNER. I agree with you: that *is* all it will amount to. There is no fight in the South; only bluster, sir. By jingo, the Seventh regiment will make an excursion from New York to New Orleans in thirty days.

HOMER (*excitedly*). Let 'em try it! Let 'em try it! And by hookey, sir, the peaceful waters of the placid Potomac will run red with the blood of the invaders.

ABNER. Will it? Raise a finger, but one little finger, sir, against the authority of the nation, and *I* tell *you*, the wheels of the chariot of war shall be so deeply graven in the soil of the South that centuries will not efface it! On to Richmond!

HOMER. I'll bet a hundred dollars *you'll* never get to Richmond, unless as a prisoner of war!

ABNER. Done! I take that bet! Put up! Put up! (*feeling for his pocket-book.*)

FRANK (*to* HOMER). I'll bet you a hundred *I* get there before *you* do, sir!

HOMER. I take it! Put up! Put up! (*each feels for pocket-book.*)

AUSTIN (*to* ABNER). I'll bet one hundred to fifty that the Southern army enters Washington before *you* set foot in Richmond!

ABNER *and* FRANK (*together*). Taken! Put up! Put up! (*all produce money simultaneously.*)

AUSTIN (*shaking a roll of bank-notes*). Who am I betting with?

ABNER. Darned if I know. Anybody! Everybody! Put up!

FRANK. What are you betting on?

HOMER. Anything! Everything! Put up! Put up! Put up!

ABNER. Shut up! Shut up, and put up!

MRS. B. (*laughingly, extending her hand*). Gentlemen, I'll hold the stakes.

OMNES. Agreed! Agreed! (*thrusting money into her hands.*)

KATE (*extending her hand*). Gentlemen, and I'll spend the stakes!

OMNES. Agreed! Agreed!

MRS. B. What are the wagers?

ABNER (*excited*). He bets me I won't see Richmond before I get there—no, no—I mean I won't get to Richmond before I see it!

HOMER (*excited*). No, sir; *you* bet me that the Southern army will never enter Richmond but as prisoners of war!

ABNER. I didn't bet anything of the kind.

HOMER. I'll leave it to Mr. Brookes.

AUSTIN. As *I* understand it——

ABNER. No, sir; nothing of the kind. I deny it. What's the bet, Powers? You heard it.

FRANK. Why, *you* bet, or rather *he* did, that——

OMNES (*variously*). Not at all! But I say! Nonsense, sir! It's a back out! (*report of cannon and loud cheers—drums.*)

ABNER. More news! On to Richmond! (*seizes all the stakes from* MRS. B.'s *hands and runs out* R. U. E.)

OMNES. Hurr, you've got my money! [*Exeunt* OMNES, *excitedly*, C.

[*Exit* MRS. B. *and* KATE, L. 1 E., *laughing.*

Enter, R. 1 E., HAROLD *and* LULU, *arm in arm.*

HAROLD (*tenderly*). You would cease to mock at my sympathies did you know the wrongs and injustice I have witnessed here, in the last few days.

LULU. What have you seen, Harold?

HAROLD. I have seen a woman, young, lovely, wealthy, whom all the world believed to be without one regret, turn aside that she might burst into heart-broken tears unobserved.

LULU. Indeed! How observant you are. Pray, who was the lady?

HAROLD. Ah, Lulu, you are not yet of that age when a woman can hide the grief which in her heart she suffers. I can read your face as I read an open book!

LULU. Ha, ha, ha! You alarm me. Come, tell me, what do you read in my face?

HAROLD. A desire to be loved—the *need* of your husband's confidence—the knowledge of his treachery!

LULU (*seizing his wrist, looking around*). Sh! Hush, I beseech you.

HAROLD (*lowering his tone*). You know it is true, yet you foolishly cherish the cause of all your wrongs, all your misery.

LULU (*appealingly*). You promised me never again to refer to this subject.

HAROLD. And would keep my promise but that I see you daily wasting your life away in idle repinings. Why be bound by a chain which your husband breaks? You have but to speak one word to command the love, the devotion which your beauty and your charms deserve!

LULU. For shame! He whom you thus assail is your *friend*, and *I* his wife!

HAROLD. And have I not respected his rights as a friend till he himself neglected you as a wife? For one year I have loved you!

LULU. Hush, for pity's sake!

HAROLD. Pity for him, or yourself? Certainly he has not shown pity to you. He married you from pique and to spite another, else would he not now neglect you for that other.

LULU (*firmly*). Prove to me that my husband has forgotten the duty, the respect he owes me, and you will find that I too will learn to forget.

HAROLD. The proof is already in your heart. You feel Hugh Ransome's neglect, and you know the cause of his indifference.

LULU (*looking fearfully around*). Sh! Some one is coming! Release me, I beg you!

HAROLD. Not till you consent to see me again!

LULU. I will—I will! I promise.

HAROLD. Where?

LULU. Here, as soon as Hugh has gone—in half an hour!

[*Runs out*, C. D.

HAROLD. Ha, ha, ha! The game is mine at last! I despise the unmanly warfare of striking at a husband through the vanity of his wife, but no other course is left me. I but use the weapons they themselves have levelled against my peace—cunning and deceit. (*looking off*) Ah, 'tis they! How happy in each other's society! How forgetful of the misery they have imposed upon me! But not for long. I will show *her* that I too can be loved by her own rival, one younger and fairer than herself. I will teach *him* the bitterness which rankles in the heart deceived. They come! [*Exit*, L. D.

Enter, R. D., HUGH *and* CONSTANCE, *the former in uniform.*

CONST. Hush! No more of that. We stand on opposite shores—I on one side, with only memory as my aid—you on the other side, with the sacred support of your wife.

HUGH. A wife who does not love me.

CONST. You mistake. Trust a woman's opinion of a woman for that. Your wife loves you, but is jealous of you.

HUGH (*incredulous*). Jealous! Of whom, pray?

CONST. Of me. Longer to blind your eyes is to risk your honor and her own.

HUGH (*startled*). My honor! You alarm me. Your words mean something. Give me the clue.

CONST. You are blind. Look into your own heart. Find there the clue you seek. Have you not driven her from your side by the open avowal that you wedded her through pique, but loved another?

HUGH. What else could I do? I but spoke the truth.

CONST. Oh, vain and foolish man! to hearken only to the cries of pride, and call them the voice of Truth! Make haste to repair your folly—to save your wife, ere it be too late.

HUGH. Again that warning! You are concealing something from me. Ha! it flashes upon me. Harold King! His professions of friendship—his attentions to my wife. Coward! I will write upon his heart, as with a pen of fire, the word Repent!

CONST. (*firmly*). Stay! First feel repentance in your own heart, ere you write it in his. You must not seek a quarrel with Harold King.

HUGH. What would you have me do? Stand quietly by and submit supinely to a doubt? Impossble!

CONST. I would have you save your wife, not sacrifice her.

HUGH. What! Let them escape my revenge? Never! I will at once confront them.

CONST. For Heaven's sake pause. You mistake not only the cause of your resentment, but its object also. Harold King is neither a villain nor a coward.

HUGH. Yet the stain of my blow has never left his manhood.

CONST. Because his resentment was withheld then, as now, by a motive.

HUGH. What motive but fear could thus possess him?

CONST. An oath! One year ago, at my entreaty, he swore never to lift his hand against your life.

HUGH. At *your* entreaty! And with what purpose?

CONST. To rescue your life, which was threatened.

HUGH. My God! And you mean to say, I owe my protection from Harold King's wrath to a woman's fears?

CONST. No; to a woman's love! You have forced the confession from me. Oh, don't force me to regret the affection which moved me then.

HUGH (*furiously*). I will not consent to an immunity from danger which degrades manhood. I demand that you at once release Harold King from his oath.

CONST. To what end? My fears, my very tears, all cry "no" to such a proposition.

HUGH. Then by Heaven I will seek him out and brand him as a coward who hides his life behind a woman's pride! [*Rushes out, C.*

CONST. I have undone all! Oh, God of mercy! what is to be done? He will seek out Harold King, will renew the quarrel of the past, and once more put his life in jeopardy. I must, if possible, warn Harold King. [*Exit, L. D.* (*Alarm bells, followed by long roll of drums and cheers.*)

Enter, C. D., quickly and excitedly, MRS. B. *and* KATE.

KATE. Have you seen them, mamma?

MRS. B. Seen whom?

KATE. The soldiers.

MRS. B. (*ominously*). On the path to death! (*shouts heard off.*)

HOMER *rushes in C. D., with black eye, clothes torn and muddy.*

KATE *and* MRS. B. (*together*). What is the matter?

HOMER. The matter is, I came near being murdered by a mob just now! I told some soldiers out there that the North had no constitutional right to coerce the South, and, darn me, if they didn't try to hang me to a lamp-post! I had no idea I could run half so fast. Is my coat torn? (*turns and shows coat split up back.*)

ABNER *runs in, C. D., with gun, sabre-bayonet, havelock, bowie-knife, and pistol.*

ABNER (*with military salute*). *I* am here; now let the seceshers beware!

HOMER. And *here* you will stay. There is no fight in you!

ABNER. Perhaps there is in *you*. If so, the time for deeds has come. Come on! (*charging upon* HOMER *with levelled bayonet.*)

HOMER (*retreating, shielding himself behind furniture, and at last* MRS. B.). Keep off! Keep away! (MRS. B. *and* KATE *shriek affrighted.*)

ABNER. Come out from behind those breast works. Come out and be bayoneted, like a man! (*backs* HOMER *out* L. 1 E. *and returns.*)

MRS. B. (*severely*). Mr. Decker, remember where you are, sir. This is neither the time nor the place for private resentments.

ABNER (*with military salute*). For *your* sake, Mrs Barbour, I spare his unworthy life!

KATE (*laughingly*). True courage is always magnanimous.

MRS. B. I am surprised at you, Mr. Decker.

ABNER. It is the atmosphere, Adelgitha. Instead of ozone, it is surcharged with sulphur and gunpowder.

KATE. Well, please don't ignite them here. (*he salutes and goes up.*)

MRS. B. Come, Kate, we have all our packing to do yet.

KATE. All right, mamma. [*They exit*, L. 1 E.

(*Shouts and drums. Music*, "Rally 'round the Flag.")

ABNER (*at window*). Hurray! On to Richmond!

Enter, R. 1 E., CONSTANCE.

CONST. (*noticing his presence*). Are you going to the war, Mr. Decker? (ABNER *advances, leaving gun at window*, HOMER *sneaks in and secures gun.*)

ABNER. Ahem! Well, not immediately. That is to say, not till I receive my commission as brigadier-general.

CONST. Why your appearance in arms, then?

ABNER. Ahem! I thought my heroic example at this crisis would have an inspiring effect, and help to swell the war-cry of the people, "On to Richmond!"

HOMER (*with bayonet at charge*). Then on with you. Move! Quick! (*prodding him.*)

ABNER. Stop! Don't—you'll hurt me! The durned thing is sharp. Oh! oh! (*makes running leap out of window. Loud crash.*)

HOMER (*triumphantly*). Ahem! First triumph of the Southern arms. [*Exit*, L. 1 E.

Enter, C. D., *quickly*, HAROLD, *meeting* CONSTANCE.

CONST. (*with start of surprise*). Ha! Have you seen him? Have you met Hugh Ransome within the last hour?

HAROLD. No. Why the question?

CONST. Because I——

HAROLD (*after pause*). Because in spite of all, my ruin, *his* marriage, you still would subordinate my pride to his peace. You bound me with an oath not to seek a manly revenge, and so forced me to find in cunning a tamer ally. That have I done. Woe to him who first kindled in my soul *that* torch of passion. It shall burn downward till it scorch and blacken not only *my* nature, but his honor!

CONST. Heaven have mercy! His fears were prophetic then. Harold King, let me not learn that we have met in vain—that the respect I once entertained for you is a reproach to memory.

HAROLD. What mean you?

CONST. I mean that I should despise you could I believe you would ruin a woman's life, wreck her home, to gain revenge upon the man you hate.

HAROLD (*furiously*). He has trampled upon my happiness, and by Heaven I will tear down the fabric of his honor, even though I perish beneath its ruins!

CONST. (*with a gesture and exclamation of horror*). Oh, Heaven! There is yet time (*crossing rapidly and resolutely.*)

HAROLD. What has shocked you? Where would you go?

CONST. To do a woman's duty. To seek *her* and save her. To beg of Heaven, that since you trace to *me* the miseries of your life, you may also owe to me your rescue from crime. God be with me now!

[*Exit*, L. 1 E., *excitedly.*

HAROLD. Surely she would not warn *him*. Bah! What if she did? I have already won the heart of his wife, and at a word from me she will cast him off. By Heaven, I will delay no longer! I will speak the word, and bear her South with me this afternoon!

Enter, C. D., *quickly*, LULU, *agitatedly.*

LULU. He has not returned. Something has happened.

HAROLD (*his manner changing to tenderness*). What! weeping unbidden tears!

LULU. He has been for hours promenading with *her!*

HAROLD. Of course he has. Nothing new about that. And yet you dare not resent his neglect.

LULU. You are right, Harold. Hitherto I have been *afraid* to speak even of my doubt; but I set that feeling now aside. He shall find that I can inflict wounds, as well as receive them!

HAROLD. And you will conquer. 'Tis the last note of fear that wakes the first note of defiance. (*slipping arm about her waist*) I will share your fate, be that what it may!

LULU. Release me, pray. Think where we are! Think of the condemnation which would follow detection!

HAROLD. Perhaps. If your husband's love brought you peace, or had by its own fidelity forbidden you to stray. But he has signed *your* release in his confessed love for Constance Burwell. Your presence is a restraint upon their joy. (*she releases herself from him.*)

LULU (*resentfully*). Ah, if I felt *that*, I would at once rid them of all restraint!

HAROLD. It is the truth. The hours of absence, which you think he passes at his club, are spent in loving converse with *her!* At this very moment, be assured, his looks of affection are fixed upon her face. (*she covers her face in her hands with an exclamation of aversion*) Have you the courage to resent this outrage upon your rights?

LULU (*looks quickly and proudly up*). I have. Put me to any test. I care nothing now for consequences!

HAROLD. Bravely spoken! Then let him see—make him feel that the precious jewel of your love, which he so lightly discards, is fully and richly prized by another! Bestow it upon me, dearest, that I may wear it upon my heart! Let me fill *his* abandoned place by *your* side, since yours is filled by Constance Burwell.

Enter, C. D., *quickly.* CONSTANCE.

LULU (*with outburst of feeling*). God help me if I err! Take me—— (*about to rush into his arms*, CONSTANCE *comes between.*)

CONST. (*severely*). You mistake, sir. Constance Burwell is not by Hugh Ransome's side. She is here!

HAROLD. Eaves-dropping, eh? I did not expect that of you.

CONST. Say rather, I overheard, without intending, falsehoods which no gentleman would stoop to utter.

HAROLD. I spoke only what you know to be true—that *your* place is by Hugh Ransome's side, not here.

CONST. *My* place is wherever a woman's duty calls me. (*to* LULU) Oh,

Lulu, I admit that one hour ago I *was* beside your husband; for then his blind self-delusion was putting in jeopardy, not only the love of an honest wife, but the honor of a confiding husband. Both of these I am in time to save!

LULU (*tearfully*). Why have you estranged my husband from me? What honest duty called *you* by his side?

CONST. The duty which one good woman should feel, to stand by another. I knew your peace, his happiness, were in peril, and I resolved to save them both!

HAROLD (*sneeringly*). How? By condemning her again to servitude?

CONST. No. By restoring him to freedom. Oh Lulu! don't be misled into the fatal error of supposing that the fault of a husband can cancel the duty of a wife. Take heart, my child, and find refuge in a wife's sweet forgiveness. There, kneel, and pray, and hope, and weep! Confide in me, I beseech you. Oh, *my* sister! (*with an exclamation of relief* LULU *throws herself into her arms.*)

LULU. I believe, and I will trust you!

CONST. (*fondly embracing her*). What say you now, Harold King? Is not my place here?

HUGH *rushes in* L. 1 E. *Enter*, C. D., MRS. B. *and* KATE.

HUGH (*breathless with excitement. To* HAROLD). I have heard all! You have taken unmanly refuge behind an oath. It may avail to protect you from my wrath, but not from my hate, my scorn, my detestation!

LULU *and* CONST. Husband! Hugh! (*restraining him.*)

HAROLD (*furious*). You know that my hands are manacled, and yet seek me out to taunt and insult me. Dolt! Dog! Cuckold! (*speaking with crescendo intensity, the last word is fairly hurled in his face.*)

HUGH (*with roar of rage*). Villain! (*breaks from those who hold him.*)

LULU (*throwing herself in front of him*). Husband! I am innocent. I swear it!

CONST. Harold King, unsay that word!

HAROLD. I'll unsay nothing till you release me from the pledge which shields his life.

CONST. Then in the face of God and man I solemnly proclaim that you have lied—cruelly and wickedly lied!

HAROLD (*with a start of rage, which he only partially represses*). Not on *you* shall my resentment fall, but on *him*, your lover!

HUGH. Coward! (*shouts and military music, pp., till last cue.*)

FRANK *rushes in*, L. 1 E., *followed by* ABNER, *the former in uniform.*

FRANK (*saluting*). We have orders to march, Colonel. The regiment is about to move.

HUGH (*to* CONSTANCE). The hour has come. Farewell! We may never meet again. But wherever I go, the prayers, the blessings of two re-united hearts shall forever follow you! (*to* LULU) Farewell, and may God bless you! (*embracing her.*)

AUSTIN *rushes in*, R. 1 E., *followed by* HOMER.

AUSTIN. Harold, our friends await us, and Virginia calls. Are you ready? (*embraces* KATE *and* MRS. B., *shakes hand with* CONSTANCE.)

HAROLD. Yes, with all my heart! Hugh Ransome, that battle-field shall be a welcome one which brings *you* face to face with my revenge!

HUGH. It shall be doubly welcome if it deals but justly with my own and my country's foe!

HAROLD. We shall see. (*to* CONSTANCE) I have kept *my* oath; remember your own! Do you hear, Hugh Ransome? She weds *me* or none Come, Austin. [*Rushes out* R. 1 E., *followed by* AUSTIN

HUGH. Never *you*, if my sword can prevent! (*to* CONSTANCE) Once more, farewell! [*Rushes out*, L. 1 E., *followed by* FRANK.

CONST. Forever! (*she falls into chair. The march becomes forte, mingled with shouts. The troops file past the window.*)

Animated Tableau.

MODERATE CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*A Confederate camp on the outskirts of Winchester, Va., in 1864. Music,* "Maryland, My Maryland." *Snow is falling.*

Enter, R. 1 E., AUSTIN BROOKES, *in uniform of a Confederate major, driving before him* HOMER, *very ragged and wretched, in a barrel, inscribed* "Coward," *having arm-holes, through which his arms project.*

AUSTIN (*severely*). Here, move on, you infernal coward!

HOMER (*saluting*). All right, Major. I say, Major, how much longer am I to wear this armor?

AUSTIN. One week more, if you are not killed in the meantime.

HOMER (*despondently*). Oh Lord! (*with sudden energy*) Damn the war, I say!

AUSTIN. What did you enlist for, if you didn't like it?

HOMER. But I *didn't* enlist, Major; I was conscripted. I told them I was a Quaker and a British subject, but they *would* have me as a warrior; and here I am.

AUSTIN (*smiling*). You liked it well enough in '61, I remember.

HOMER. Ah, yes. That was before the real fighting commenced.

AUSTIN (*sternly*). Well, cowards are of no use on either side, and should our alert enemy again attack us, as he has twice done in the past month, General King's orders are, that you be sent to the front as a breastwork for braver men. [*Exit*, R. 1 E.

HOMER (*looking stealthily around, in bated breath*). Damn General King! (*louder*) Not individually, but on general principles. (*goes up cautiously.*)

Enter, L. 1 E., ABNER, *barefooted, wearing beard, ragged uniform, very old slouch hat, very bright musket.*

ABNER (*levelling gun*). Here, here! Where are you sneaking off to, you durned skunk?

HOMER (*hastening forward*). I d-don't know, Sergeant.

ABNER. Of course you don't. What does a cuss like you know, anyhow? I'll bet you don't even know what you're fighting about.

HOMER. You'd win that bet, Sergeant. Besides, as a matter of fact, I ain't fighting. I'm a Quaker.

ABNER. A non-combatant, eh? So much the worse for *you*. A man who won't fight in such a cause as ours, is no soldier, and don't deserve to wear the uniform of one.

HOMER (*conciliatory*). Well, but I'm not in uniform, Sergeant.

ABNER. Of course you're not. Can't I see? I wonder they didn't dress you in petticoats. *That's* the sort of uniform for *you*. (*fiercely*) What are you good for, anyhow?

HOMER (*meekly*). For breastworks, General King says.

ABNER (*scornfully*). Breastworks? What soldier would want to be protected by such an or'nary cuss as you? (*levelling musket*) I've a great mind to unload my musket right into your carcase.

HOMER (*falling on knees, disappears in barrel and reappears again*). P-p-please don't f-fire, Sergeant, for the sake of my f-family.

ABNER. Family! You don't really mean that any woman would tie herself to a nondescript like you? *Are* you married?

HOMER. N-not exactly, but——

ABNER (*fiercely*). Then what business have you with a family?

HOMER (*alarmed*). I haven't a family yet, Sergeant, but it's not my fault; indeed it's not. I was jilted by a rich widow.

ABNER. So was I jilted, and by a rich widow too. But is *that* a thing to cry about? What does a widow amount to in war times? The woods are full of 'em! (*inquiringly*) So you were jilted by a widow, eh, you infernal jelly-fish! What's her name?

HOMER. Adelgitha Barbour.

ABNER (*lets his musket slip down on his foot*) Vanilla beans! *My* widow! Who are you, anyway? (*putting up his slouch hat and scrutinizing his face*) Homer Cooke!——

HOMER (*sadly shaking his head*). The darned fool! That's my name.

ABNER. Is it possible you don't recognize me? I'm an old friend of yours.

HOMER (*with outburst of delight*). Why, it's Abner Decker, of Connecticut!

ABNER (*slapping his hand over* HOMER'S *mouth, in a whisper*). Sh! Would you ruin me? (*aloud*) Yes, sir, I am Abner Decker, of Arkansaw —the 27th Arkansaw, sir; the pride of old Jubal Early's army, and the terror of the Yankees. Damn 'em! I hate a Yankee more than a wet shirt! I could eat 'em alive, if I was very hungry! (*glancing anxiously around, aside*) I've got to play Arkansaw fine, you know, or 'twould be all up with me.

HOMER (*lugubriously*). I wish *I* had a chance to do it.

ABNER. And they've got you labelled "Coward." *That* gets me. Durn my old hat, but I thought you were one of that kind of fire-eaters who could never get enough of fighting.

HOMER (*smiling*). That was *your* mistake. But I remember that you were on the Northern side, one of the On-to-Richmond warriors.

ABNER (*alarmed*). Sh! Don't talk so darned loud. I was—once.

HOMER. How did you get South, then?

ABNER. Followed the widow.

HOMER. So did I.

ABNER. Till she wrote me out to Memphis, where I had got, a darned cold-blooded kind of a letter, that the troubles of her country were so near to her heart that she could take no thought of mere personal pleas-

ures, and that (*with a sneer*) of course my duties in the army demanded all my time.

HOMER. Almost the same as what she wrote to me. But how did you get into the army?

ABNER. By a mistake—of mine. To soothe my blighted affections, I took to dealing in contraband cotton on a "crooked" permit from a Federal general. I was making money hand over fist, when one day I was gobbled up by Forrest.

HOMER. As an enemy?

ABNER. No, *sir!* I pretended I was a "sympathizer," and played it so well that they believed it. They persuaded me to enlist, and I was fool enough to do so, thinking I could easily skip away afterwards. (*drily*) That was my mistake.

HOMER (*in whisper*). Then you've really been fighting against your own side?

ABNER. Sh! Not much. I've blustered and *talked* fight as much—well, (*smiling*) as much as *you* used to talk before the wah; but (*in a whisper*) I've always managed to get on detailed service, or in hospital, whenever I "nosed" a fight in the air.

HOMER. Still, you can't play that all the time, you know. How do you propose to escape? Desert?

ABNER (*affecting indignation*). Desert! *Me!* No, sir! (*looking furtively around*) I *may* be taken prisoner, (*winking*) but durn me if I'll ever desert!

HOMER (*winking in turn*). I understand. (*whispering*) Suppose we de—I mean, get captured together?

ABNER. That suits me. It's risky work though. It's death if we are caught!

HOMER (*gulping*). And it's death if we remain—death by starvation or cold; so what's the odds, so long as we are perfectly happy?

ABNER (*looking quickly around*). Sh! (*loudly*) Here! Move! Move on, you dog-goned coward! Move on, or I'll make a hole in you!

Enter, L. 1 E., AUSTIN.

AUSTIN. What is the matter, Sergeant?

ABNER (*saluting*). Nothing, Major, only I caught this fellow skulking around.

AUSTIN. That's right. Keep him moving around the camp. (*turns away.*)

ABNER (*winking at him*). You hear that, you lop-eared scion of a Vulpine race? Move on, quick, quicker, quicker! (*prodding him with bayonet.*)

HOMER (*winking knowingly at him, affecting terror*). Please don't. Oh! Oh!

AUSTIN. Don't kill him, Sergeant.

ABNER. Not entirely, Major; only a *little* bit. Now run, run, run! [HOMER *runs out*, R. 1 E., *followed by* ABNER *with levelled musket.*

AUSTIN. I hope Kate will be able to visit our camp to-day. It's awfully monotonous. I don't mind the fighting, but the waiting is awful.

Re-enter, R. 1 E., ABNER.

Where's your skulker?

ABNER. I handed him over to the guard, sir; *they'll* run him around for the next hour. It's all the fun we have now.

AUSTIN. Yes, it is awfully dull. It won't continue so much longer.

General King is not the man to idle away his time when an enemy is in sight.

ABNER (*apprehensively*). Do you think he will attack, Major?

AUSTIN (*laughing*). You had better ask *him* that question.

ABNER. No, thank you. He's awfully quick-tempered, and might make me an uncivil reply—with his revolver. Peeled potatoes! but he's a fighter!

AUSTIN. The most desperate in the army. I have watched him all through the fight of last month, when the Yanks under Colonel Ransome surprised our camp. Why, he flew over the field like a tiger. He must have cut down a dozen men or more before he reached the Yankee colonel. Do you remember the fight, Sergeant?

ABNER (*gulping*. N—Yes; but I wasn't in it. I had the bad luck, confound it, to be on hospital service at the time.

AUSTIN. 'Twas glorious! You have heard much and seen little of hand to-hand fighting in this war, Sergeant. I *saw* it that day. The two lines were mixed in an inextricable confusion, when General King sighted Colonel Ransome, and made for him. Both exhausted their revolvers, and gave and received wounds as they advanced. At last they met, and crossing swords, commenced hacking and stabbing at each other. Not a word was spoken on ether side, but you could see from their blazing eyes and clenched teeth that they meant death! The din was something awful; but the men within sight ceased fighting, and seemed to watch, spell-bound, the struggle of the two leaders. Suddenly Ransome's horse fell, carrying the Colonel down with him, and in an instant the General's sword was at his heart. "Surrender!" he cried. "I refuse!" shouted the Yankee colonel. "Then die!" exclaimed our general, when, as he drew back his arm to strike the fatal blow, a spent shot from one of the enemy's riflemen struck him on the breast, and he fell senseless over the unconscious body of his brave adversary.

ABNER. What the deuce, Major, could have induced Colonel Ransome to break the parole our general so generously gave him, and escape?

AUSTIN (*with a sigh*). I don't know. That is a mystery. I only know that he stained a very brilliant record by a very infamous treachery. (*looks around*) Here comes the General. (*music.*)

ABNER. Excuse me, Major; but I think he's in bad humor, and I'd rather not meet him. (*aside, going*) Things are getting altogether too "glorious" for me. I'll skip away to-night! [*Exit*, R. 1 E.

Enter, L. 1 E., HAROLD, *in dingy uniform, his left arm in a sling.* AUSTIN *salutes.*

HAROLD (*giving papers*). Adjutant, deliver these orders to Major Goldsborough. The intercourse between pickets must be stopped, and at once.

AUSTIN. All right, sir. How are your wounds progressing, General?

HAROLD. Favorably, sir. 'Twas a close shave though. Ransome's ball was well aimed, and I think would have reached my heart, had it not been turned aside by——

AUSTIN. Your pocket Testament, General?

HAROLD (*grimly*). No, sir, by a pack of cards. You were in Winchester last night, sir, after the ladies, as usual, I suppose?

AUSTIN. I suppose you know, General, I am engaged to Miss Kate Barbour?

HAROLD. Miss Barbour, eh? Oh yes, I remember; full of levity and laughter.

AUSTIN (*with heat*). But a true daughter of Virginia, for all that, General. I have known her to start at four o'clock in the morning, in the depth of winter, on a lonely ride of twenty-seven miles, to give General Lomax warning of an intended surprise; and when I was wounded at Darkesville, she rode ten miles, at night, across the mountains, to fetch me a surgeon. She had to cross a mountain stream, with the water knee deep; and when she got back to me her clothes were frozen stiff to her waist, so that she could scarcely stand. (*brushing away a tear*) God bless her!

HAROLD (*gruffly*). Go and deliver those orders, sir.

AUSTIN (*aside*). *He* has no heart for love, the superb brute!

[*Salutes and exit*, R. 1 E. HAROLD *staggers and sits on camp-stool.*

HAROLD. Aye, God bless her, and all the brave women of all the South. They have indeed been our sustaining angels But for them the unequal struggle would have ended long ago in disaster and defeat. But the joys of love are not for me. My uncompanioned life, my isolated heart, too plainly and sadly attest that! If I could only shake *her* from my thought! But that seems impossible. Am I never to escape the influence of that passion? I thought my love only one of youth's broken toys, to be lightly cast aside, or as lightly replaced. Instead of that, it proves to be one of the needs of my life. And *he* escaped—*he*, the man who turned my noonday into night! By Heaven, I would risk eternity for one more chance of meeting him. (*music, agitato, pp.*)

Re-enter, R. 1 E., *quickly*, AUSTIN.

AUSTIN (*saluting*). General, Colonel Ransome, who escaped a week ago, has been re-captured, within our lines.

HAROLD (*with wild exclamation of joy, starting up*). Good! Conduct him here, at once, and issue orders to have him shot at daybreak. (*exit* AUSTIN, R. 1 E.) Ha, ha, ha! The gods fight on my side after all! Ha, ha, ha! He hoped to induce her to evade her oath, and to marry him at the close of the war, if he escaped its perils. Well, he shall *not* escape, and *she* shall read in his ignominious death the constancy of my love, the tenacity of my hate. (*falls back exhausted into seat.*)

Enter, R. 1 E., HUGH, *in uniform, accompanied by* AUSTIN, *who salutes and exits.* HUGH *is very pale from wound in his chest.* HAROLD *rises, and the two stare fixedly at each other.*

HAROLD. So we meet again!

HUGH. Had I the choice, it should be upon the battle-field with weapons.

HAROLD. Your weapons availed you little at our last meeting there. Colonel Ransome, one week ago you violated your parole, and escaped.

HUGH (*coldly*). I did.

HAROLD. Not content with that dishonor, you have dared to re-enter my camp as a spy.

HUGH (*starting*). A spy! (*restraining himself*) I spurn the accusation with contempt. It is false!

HAROLD. Then what brought you within my picket lines?

HUGH. My sense of honor! I voluntarily returned to deliver myself into your hands.

HAROLD (*with expression of contempt*). Umph! To what end?

HUGH. To keep my word to an enemy. To prove to him that I am neither a coward nor a liar!

HAROLD. If neither of these, why did you break your word of honor as a soldier?

HUGH. To save the life of a comrade. My friend Captain Austin, also your prisoner, and badly wounded, was dying for want of proper nourishment and care. He appealed to me to save *his* life, as he had once before saved mine. I made the effort, and escaped. I swam the river with him, placed him safely in the keeping of our friends, and returned to accept the penalty of the act.

HAROLD. The penalty is death, at sunrise!

HUGH (*coolly*). I know it, and am prepared.

HAROLD. I am glad you have the courage to meet it as becomes a man.

HUGH. And is it possible that you even entertained a doubt of my courage? I would not stain my own character, or the cause I hold dear, by one act of treachery.

HAROLD. I am sorry you are in this plight. I seek your life, Hugh Ransome, and would gladly sacrifice my own to take it, but I desire not your death in this way. I am a soldier, not an executioner.

HUGH. Spare your mercy; 'tis wasted upon me. I would scorn to accept even life at hands so base as yours!

HAROLD (*calmly*). You *know* the impossibility of such a release, else you would not address me in language no prisoner should utter to his captor. You *know* I cannot resent an insult from you now, and your taunt is therefore cowardly.

HUGH. It is *not* cowardly, since I purchase with my life the opportunity of branding you to your face as a villain! No true man would deliberately seek to corrupt the wife even of an enemy whom he hated. Yet *this* you did.

HAROLD. No true man would subject an honest wife to the pity of the enemy whom he had wronged. Yet this *you* did.

HUGH. You but palter with words which mean nothing.

HAROLD. 'Twas *your* defection which proved the challenge to my sympathy. *Your* love for Constance Burwell—the one idol of all *my* hopes—induced your wife to *encourage* my attentions——

HUGH. Encourage them! Harold King, you slander a dead woman! You lie!

HAROLD. Lie! (*drawing his pistol*) Your life shall atone for the insult. (*levels at his heart.*)

HUGH (*folding his arms, calmly*). Fire!

HAROLD (*lowering weapon*). Bah! The word prisoner protects you. You shall not be dignified by a death at my hands.

Enter, L. 1 E., AUSTIN.

A felon's doom for you! To the guard house with him!

HUGH. Not a felon's death, Harold King, but a soldier's, and at the hands of my country's foe! Neither the doom itself, nor its means, have any terrors for me. "Whether in the battle's van, or on the scaffold high, the fittest place for man to die is where he dies for man!"

[*Exit* HUGH *and* AUSTIN, L. 1 E.

HAROLD. Ha, ha, ha! He bears himself gallantly. So much the better. It reconciles my vengeance with my pride.

Enter, R. 1 E., ABNER. *He salutes.*

ABNER. Two ladies, General, from Winchester, to see you on personal business.

HAROLD. Ladies—to see me? All right; conduct them here. (*turns away.* ABNER *salutes and exits,* R. 1 E.) No line, no message from *her!* For all sufferers by the war she has, in one shape or other, manifested her sympathy. It was *her* wealth, and *her* generous pity, which first gave form to that noble beneficence, the Sanitary Commission. Night and day, with untiring zeal and boundless charity, she has gone from town to town, from camp to camp, from hospital to hospital, encouraging the sick, ministering to the hurt, supporting the needy. Thousands and thousands of wounded soldiers have experienced the far-reaching touch of her practical benevolence; and few of our Southern soldiers confined in Northern prisons but have had grateful cause to acknowledge and to bless the personal kindness and Christian benefactions of Constance Burwell. All this and more has she done for others! For *me*, whose life she has thwarted, whose nature she has perverted, she has neither pity nor remembrance. My scouts report that she is now visiting the hospitals of the enemy's camp beyond there. She is almost within sight of the man whom she encouraged only to blight, yet is as silent as the death she has made me covet. But she *shall* speak! Her lover's execution shall wring from her heart a cry as full of anguish as that which fills my own!

Enter, R. 1 E., ABNER, *followed by* MRS. BARBOUR *and* KATE. *Both ladies are neatly dressed in old clothes of fashions of many years ago, and both are very cheery in manner. They cross to* HAROLD *and shake hands cordially.*

ABNER (*apart*). And *she* has forgotten! The heart that has truly loved never forgets. Oh, woman, woman! [*Salutes and exit,* R. 1 E.

MRS. B. Oh! Did I hurt your wounded arm?

HAROLD (*wincing*). Not—much.

KATE. What a narrow escape you had from death! I never thought that Hugh Ransome could be *so* vindictive.

HAROLD. Oh, that is all right. I am sorry I have but *one* seat to offer you.

MRS. B. We can remain only an instant. I am on business of the highest importance. General, I am pickling some cucumbers, and of course need salt; so I sent to the provost-marshal this morning for an order for eight ounces extra, and, would you believe me, General, Major Goldsborough refused me.

HAROLD. Ha, ha, ha! Did he! Well, salt is very scarce, you know. We have even been forced to use it as currency. However, you shall have the order. Excuse me. (*sits at camp-table, writes in book, tears out leaf and gives it.*)

MRS. B. Thanks (*when he sits*) I said *you* would set the matter right, so I got one of the hospital stewards to drive us out here in an ambulance. And, by the way, General, who do you think we heard of yesterday by the flag of truce from Shepherdstown? Constance Burwell?

HAROLD (*coldly*). Indeed!

MRS. B. Yes. She's there superintending the establishment of a hospital for the wounded. They say she has spent all her fortune in procuring comforts for the prisoners on both sides.

HAROLD (*cynically*). Is it despair or remorse which has impelled her to do that?

MRS. B. (*warmly*). Neither; only good heartedness. She has neither home, husband, children, or lover, you know, upon whom to lavish the

natural affections of a woman, and she devotes them therefore to the cause of charity.

HAROLD (*bitterly*). And so wastes them.

KATE (*shocked*). Oh, General! How can you say that? I think Constance Burwell's surrender of her fortune, her place in society, her abundant chances to marry, all to serve the victims and the martyrs of war, perfectly noble, and I honor her ten thousand times more than I ever did before!

MRS. B. What do you think I heard of her, General? That she took a solemn oath never to marry, and sacrificed the highest and dearest hopes of a woman's heart, in order that her lover might marry a richer woman, whom he loved better.

HAROLD. Who was the lover?

MRS. B. That is a mystery.

KATE (*scornfully*). Well, a nice specimen of a man *he* must be, who could exact such an oath from a good woman! Human nature is as much disgraced by his existence as it is beautified and honored by hers. (*innocently*) Don't you think so, General?

HAROLD (*starts as if from his musing, brusquely*). Bah! (*turning away.*)

KATE (*innocently*). Is your wound paining you, General?

HAROLD (*brusquely*). Yes. (*aside*) The wound in my heart. (*turns away.*)

MRS. B. (*aside to* KATE). He is in one of his black moods. Let us leave.

KATE. You won't object, General, will you, to our seeing Major Brookes, now we are here?

HAROLD (*calls*). Orderly! (ABNER *appears*) Conduct these ladies to Major Brookes' quarters. [*Exit, quickly into house.*

ABNER (*saluting*). Ahem! I am at your service, ladies. Oh, Adelgitha!

MRS. B. (*eyeing him*). Surely! What! Are *you* Abner Decker?

ABNER. That's me! Kinder sunburnt, ain't I?

KATE (*surprised*). Mr. Decker in the *Southern* army!

ABNER. Kinder curious, ain't it? Made the fellows on the other side turn *blue* when they heard it.

MRS. B. It hasn't made *you* gray, seemingly.

ABNER. Ahem! No. (*aside*) I wonder if that had a double meaning.

KATE. You have changed sides, then, since I last saw you?

AUSTIN. Ye-es—yes. Only fools are constant.

KATE (*with quiet irony*). Yet I have known many inconstant men who are not on that account deemed wise.

ABNER (*gallantly, to* MRS. B.). Besides, I felt I could never be happy until I breathed the same atmosphere with you.

MRS. B. (*curtseying*). Oh, thank you. This is a field day for personal compliments to me.

ABNER. Ahem! None but the fair deserve the brave!

MRS. B. Apropos of braves. What became of poor Homer Cooke?

KATE. Met a hero's death in defence of the South, I suppose?

ABNER. Not a bit of it. Homer Cooke is alive and kicking. At least he was kicking when I last saw him, half an hour ago.

KATE. What! In camp?

ABNER. No; in a barrel.

KATE. Ha, ha, ha! Not like Diogenes, I hope?

ABNER. No. Something like pickled pork packed for exportation. But I am delaying you, and the General always expects his orders to be

carried out promptly. (*placing himself*) Attention, battalion! By the right flank, right face! Forward! March! Left! Left!

[*Exit, marching*, R. 1 E.

Re-enter HAROLD, *from house.*

HAROLD. How the sound of her name affected me! And Kate Barbour spoke, I suppose, the voice of the world in condemning the pledge by which Constance hoped to preserve *his* life. *My* refusal to accept death at their bidding is unmanly, but her trifling with the passion she awoke is nothing. Nothing? Where is the peace of mind which once I knew? Where my lost youth? Who shall give them back to me?

Re-enter, R. 1 E., ABNER.

ABNER (*saluting*). A lady, who has made her way into our lines, asks to see you, sir.

HAROLD (*rudely*). No! I have had enough of their chatter for one day at least.

ABNER. This one seems very much in earnest, sir; says it's life or death.

HAROLD. Perhaps she brings me information. Did she give her name?

ABNER. No, sir. But one of the men, who knows her, says she's a nurse from the other side, and that she has always been kind to our boys when prisoners.

HAROLD (*inquiringly*). A nurse?

AUSTIN. Yes, sir; in the Sanitary Commission.

HAROLD. And kind to our boys, eh? Well, bring her in; she shall be welcome for their sakes. (*ex.t* ABNER) My brave boys! How through all their rags shines the heroism of their blood and training! Starving, dying, yet fighting to the last. (*rising and removing his hat*) Comrades, your commander salutes you!

Enter quickly, R. 1 E., CONSTANCE, *in garb of a nurse.*

Be seated, madam. (*pushing stool toward her*) I am glad of the opportunity of thanking you in the name of our Southern soldiers. (*she raises her veil*) Great Heavens! Constance Burwell!

CONST. (*sadly*). Yes, Constance Burwell. I thought *never* to see you again, but duty led me here. I feared you would fail to subdue that worst foe that can assail a man—himself, and I am here to assist you *against* yourself—to win you back from what is false and revengeful, to what is true and generous in your nature.

HAROLD. What do you mean? Speak out; I am a soldier, and prefer plain talking.

CONST. This morning I received a note left for me by Hugh Ransome, telling me that he had violated his parole in the cause of friendship—that he started out intending to deliver himself up to you, and that he felt certain the penalty of death would be enforced against him.

HAROLD (*intensely angered*). Ah, I understand. And you would plead for the forfeited life of this self-condemned traitor!

CONST. No; I would entreat you not to sully your record by sacrificing to an unworthy revenge this noble and heroic enemy.

HAROLD. Not another word! The time has passed when you could swerve me from the line of my duty. You implore in vain. His doom is settled. Nothing shall change my mind!

CONST. This is not justice, but revenge!

HAROLD. No; it is justice. By every law of honorable war, of human justice, his life is forfeit to his breach of faith!

CONST. By every law of God, every instinct of humanity, he merits praise rather than condemnation.

HAROLD. You say you love this man?

CONST. Better, as you know, than peace, or comfort, or ease—than all, save honor!

HAROLD. And you would save his life?

CONST. At any cost consistent with Christian duty!

HAROLD. There is but *one* way in which that may be done. His life is precious to *you;* so is your smile to *me*. Ransom *his* life with *your* smile. Be my wife!

CONST. (*aghast*). And *you* demand this of me!

HAROLD (*firmly*). Yes. Upon no other condition shall he be spared. I swear it!

CONST. (*shuddering, momentarily covering her face with her hands, as if to shut out a hideous prospect*). And—are you willing thus to traffic in human hearts—to make of human life a thing of barter and sale?

HAROLD. Yes. I am not to be frightened by a name. No worse *that* than to make my love the plaything of your vanity, my peace the mock of your pride.

CONST. (*scornfully*). And you would accept my hand knowing my heart was his?

HAROLD. I would. I should not despair of ultimately winning your heart. Esteem exists even where love is dead; and esteem is the basis of conjugal peace.

CONST. This is your decision. Now listen to mine. I refuse. I will not sell my soul to your base revenge. I will not buy *his* life with my tears!

HAROLD. Then why came you here to palter again with my pride—once more to cajole my heart? I have already wasted too much time. (*going*) I will at once issue orders for his death.

CONST. (*grasping him*). Stop! You already have my oath never to wed without your consent. That oath I will keep. Is not *that* enough?

HAROLD. No, no! At the sound of your voice, the love which I had forced back to its source, then burst through all restraints, and once more flooded my heart with its passion! I will not surrender you again! *That* love is the life of my being! Then love for love—life for life!—the lex talionis of the world. *Your* love, or *his* life!

CONST. And should I—Oh, my God!—(*beating back her tears*) should I consent to be—your—wife, (*twining and retwining her fingers in the effort to suppress her anguish and her cries*) will you pledge me your *honor* (*speaking the word with a tinge of contempt*) to release Hugh Ransome at once, and send him home, subject to exchange.

HAROLD (*eagerly*). I will, at once. And as there is no longer any exchange of prisoners, this release will entirely withdraw him from the war and its dangers.

CONST. (*faintly*). Swear it.

HAROLD. On my honor I swear it!

CONST. (*aside*). Mine the fault—upon my heart fall all the suffering.

HAROLD (*impatiently*). Well, do you consent, or refuse!

CONST. (*after pause, turns and gives him her hand, faint voice*). I—I—consent. (*totters.*)

HAROLD (*with ardor, attempting to draw her to him*). My devotion shall repay you!

CONST. (*snatching away her hand, which he is about to kiss, tremulous with suppressed anguish*). Stand off, General King! Our barter is not yet consummated. Until it *is*, permit me the freedom of my own thoughts and my own hand.

HAROLD (*bowing*). Certainly. (*calls*) Orderly! (ABNER *appears*) Bring the Yankee colonel here, and the chaplain of the nearest regiment.

ABNER. Yes, sir. (*aside*) Looks like marriage. *That's* bad.

[*Exit*, R. 1 E.

HAROLD. It rests with you whether or not to make known to Colonel Ransome the terms upon which he has been spared.

CONST. (*bitterly*). The terms, you mean, upon which his life has been purchased. No, I shall not tell him. His noble nature would reject with indignation the proposition to make a woman's broken heart his stepping-stone to safety.

HAROLD. I will have the parole made out at once. There need be no delay. [*Exit, with shrug*, L. 1 E.

Enter, R. 1 E., HUGH. *He rushes eagerly, with extended hands, to greet* CONSTANCE.

HUGH. *You* here! Then you received my note?

CONST. (*faintly*). And responded, you see, in person.

HUGH. I am sorry you came. My note should not have been delivered to you till to-morrow; all would then have been over. *Now* I can only speak my last farewell to you, (*with bitterness*) by the permission of—my jailors!

CONST. (*nearly fainting*). Hugh, you are not to—that is to say, under Heaven's mercy I have been the means of—of saving your life.

HUGH. Saving my life!

CONST. Yes, yes! You are to be at once paroled, and sent home!

HUGH. But I will not have it so. I refuse to accept my life as his gift.

CONST. (*trying to smile*). You are mistaken, Hugh. He does not *give* you life; he—he——(*pauses with sudden embarrassment.*)

HUGH. He *sells* it!—the price your tears, perhaps your peace! I will *not* be a party to such a crime. Better a soldier's death in the service of his country than an ignoble, self-reproachful life.

CONST. Oh, no, no! My friend, you must not say that. What matters the price of this mercy, so long as it does not involve your honor!

HUGH. And is there nothing dishonorable then in an act which, while it opens for me the door from prison cell, condemns to hopeless servitude the most devoted of friends?

CONST. You misunderstand. You will be set free.

HUGH. What is freedom but the worst of mockeries, if it bars me from the woman most sacred in my affections, most precious to my hopes—from you!

CONST. Life has noble duties, grander opportunities for you than can be bounded by love for me. You owe your country something.

HUGH. Life, honor—everything! Everything but the love I bear for you, and which is now so inwrought into my being that, like the heart it brightens and gladdens, 'tis the essence of life itself! I cannot, will not, separate from you. If my life is spared, its love for you must be left unshackled. I will not accept one, if it denies me the other. (*draws her toward him.*)

CONST. (*receding*). That cannot be.

HUGH. Cannot be! What mean you? I am a soldier; let me know the worst. And since my life is the issue of the question, let *me* de-

cide for myself whether 'tis worth the cost. Once before you pledged your peace for my safety; what is the condition of this release?

CONST. I—cannot—tell you!

Re-enter, L. 1. E., HAROLD, *with paper.*

HAROLD. But I can. I have spared your life upon the condition that she becomes my wife!

HUGH (*with exclamation of horror*). Ah! *Your* wife! Never! I spurn the thought with horror and contempt! I spurn you as a wretch beyond the reach of scorn, for having even thought of such a proposition. Coward! I demand the death pronounced upon me; it is my right!

HAROLD (*furiously, to* CONSTANCE). You hear him. He insists upon dying! By Heaven, he shall be instantly gratified! (*calls*) Orderly! (ABNER *appears*) Find Major Brookes; tell him to detail a firing party, and report for orders. The prisoner is to be shot at once! Quick!

ABNER. Yes, sir. (*aside*) Ah, death! That is better.

[*Exit, hastily*, R. 1 E.

HAROLD (*to* HUGH). You see, I am merciful, even to you. I do not permit you to be kept long in suspense.

HUGH. I understand your nature, and read your heart too well to be in any doubt. I am ready.

CONST. (*to* HAROLD). This murder *must* not be perpetrated. I beseech you, Harold King, blacken not your soul with this cruel crime,

HAROLD. Not one word further! He has sealed his own doom. No earthly power can save him now. (*long roll, shouts, cannon, and musketry. Starting*) Ha! What is that firing?

HUGH. Do you not recognize it? 'Tis the voice of the men of the North. It means that life is not alone in *your* keeping—that death is seeking *you* in your own camp!

AUSTIN *and* ABNER *rush in*, R. 1 E., *excitedly.*

AUSTIN. General, our pickets have been driven in, the rifle pits captured, and the camp attacked!

HAROLD. They must be driven back. Look to the prisoner. Rally, boys, rally! and drive them back. (*alarms.*) [*Rushes out*, R. 1 E.

HUGH (*moving*). If I were but free now!

AUSTIN (*levelling revolver*). But you are not!

CONST. I will answer for him, sir. (*to* HUGH) Oh, my friend, why did you reject his mercy? Why impose upon me the hideous memory which his revenge now threatens?

HUGH. Because I have no desire to live and see you the wife of another. Because I would rather die than surrender again the dear hope of one day making you mine. (*alarms.*)

AUSTIN. We are outnumbered! I must lend a hand. (*to* ABNER) Orderly, keep a sharp eye on the prisoner here. If he attempts to escape, kill him. Kate is on the heights; she shall see how I can fight; how I can die, if needs be. [*Exit*, R. 1 E.

Alarms. MRS. B. *and* KATE *rush in*, L. 1 E., *excitedly.*

MRS. B. See how splendidly our boys are behaving!

KATE. Oh, if we were only men for one hour, mamma—you and I! (*clapping her hands*) There was a splendid rally! Here comes a shell! Look out, mamma! (*both dodge.*)

HOMER *rushes in*, R. 1 E., *trips up, rises again, etc.*

HOMER (*apart to* ABNER). Now is our time. Let's skip.

MRS. B. What! Homer!

HOMER. I wish I was home again. Adelgitha! (*tries to embrace her, she pushes him, he falls, and the barrel rolls a short distance by the force of the shove.*)

ABNER. A heavy fall in pork! (*alarms. Helping him to rise*) Yes, now's the time. Slip off your overcoat. (HOMER *emerges from barrel*) Down with the Yanks! [*Exit*, L. 1 E.

HOMER. Liberty or death! On to Washington! [*Runs out*, L. 1 E.

CONST. The guard has left. Heaven sends you this opportunity of escape. Accept it and fly.

HUGH. And leave *you* as my hostage! Never!

CONST. But you will be murdered.

HUGH. I anticipated all that when I returned. (*alarms.*)

MRS. B. (*looking off*). Heaven! what commotion is that?

CONST. (*looking off*). An important officer is wounded.

KATE. He is only wounded. They are leading him this way.

HUGH. 'Tis he! 'Tis General King!

Enter, R. 1 E., HAROLD, *wounded, assisted by* AUSTIN.

CONST. (*anxiously*). Are you badly hurt?

HAROLD. Yes. They got me at last! But (*smiling*) we drove 'em, eh, Major? Ah! (*pang of pain*) I have yet time for an act of mercy and justice. Hugh Ransome, you caused me many years of desolation and sorrow; but—I—pardon—all. Will—you—do as much for me?

HUGH. Yes. (*offering hand*) Death cancels all resentments.

HAROLD. Life has yet one last triumph for me—the conquest of myself. (*to* CONSTANCE) I release you from your oath, Constance, and I parole Colonel Ransome. Here is the parole. (*giving paper.*)

CONST. God of the living and the dying, be thine the praise! Harold King, my pity and forgiveness go with you into eternity! (*renewed alarms.*)

HAROLD. What is that?

AUSTIN (*looking off*). A new attack; the other was but a feint.

HAROLD. At them, boys! That's right! We have beaten them before, and will do it again. See, they come! Save the guns! You promised me you would never let your guns be taken. Good! Steady, now—steady!—stead—(*totters as he speaks. At last his sword, which he had levelled at an imaginary foe, falls from his grasp, his arm drops by his side, and he sinks gently down, supported by* AUSTIN.)

HUGH (*uncovering*). A brave enemy has gone! (*music, pp.*)

CONST. Gone where there are no enmities—where the heroes of the Blue and the Gray, reconciled by death, shall, by the mercy of God, rest in peace for evermore. (*The firing recedes. Cheers. Music,* "Dixie," *or* "The Star-spangled Banner."

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ETHIOPIAN AND COMIC DRAMA.—Continued.

No.		M.	F.
49.	Night in a Strange Hotel, Ethiopian sketch	2	
132.	Noble Savage, Eth. sketch	4	1
153.	Norah's Good Bye, Irish musical sketch	2	1
145.	No Pay No Cure, Eth. sketch	5	
22.	Obeying Orders, Eth. sketch	2	1
27.	100th Night of Hamlet, Eth. sketch	7	1
125.	Oh, Hush! operatic olio, 3 scenes.	4	1
30.	One Night in a Bar-Room, Eth. sketch	7	
114.	One Night in a Medical College, Eth. sketch	7	1
76.	One, Two, Three, Eth. sketch	7	
91.	Painter's Apprentice, Eth. farce	5	
87.	Pete and the Peddler, Eth. and Irish sketch	2	1
135.	Pleasant Companions, Eth. sketch.	5	1
92.	Polar Bear, Eth. farce	4	1
9.	Policy Players, Eth. sketch	7	
57.	Pompey's Patients, Eth. interlude, 2 scenes	6	
65.	Porter's Troubles, sketch	6	1
66.	Port Wine vs. Jealousy, sketch	2	1
115.	Private Boarding, farce	3	3
14.	Recruiting Office, Eth. sketch	5	
105.	Rehearsal (The), Irish farce, 2 sc.	4	2
45.	Remittance from Home, Ethiopian sketch	6	
55.	Rigging a Purchase, Eth. sketch	3	
81.	Rival Artists, Eth. sketch	4	
26.	Rival Tenants, Eth. sketch	4	
138.	Rival Barbers' Shops, Eth. farce	6	1
15.	Sam's Courtship, Eth. farce	2	1
59.	Sausage Makers, Eth. sketch, 2 sc.	5	1
21.	Scampini, pantomime, 2 scenes	6	3
160.	Scenes in Front of a Clothing Store, farce	7	1
80.	Scenes on the Mississippi, Eth. sketch, 2 scenes	6	
84.	Serenade (The), Eth. sketch, 2 sc.	7	
38.	Siamese Twins, Eth. sketch, 2 sc.	5	
74.	Sleep Walker, Eth. sketch, 2 scenes	3	
46.	Slippery Day, Eth. sketch	6	1
69.	Squire for a Day, Eth. sketch	5	1
56.	Stage-struck Couple, Eth. interlude	2	1
72.	Strangers, Eth. burlesque	1	1
13.	Streets of New York, sketch	6	
16.	Storming the Fort, sketch	5	
7.	Stupid Seavant, sketch	2	
121.	Stocks Up! Stocks Down! Eth. farce	2	
154.	Sulphur Bath, Eth. farce	3	
47.	Take It, Don't Take It, Eth. sketch	2	
54.	Them Papers, Eth. sketch	3	
100.	Three Chiefs, Eth. sketch, 2 scenes	6	
102.	Three A. M., sketch, 2 scenes.	3	1
34.	Three Strings to one Bow, Eth. sketch	4	1
122.	Ticket Taker, Eth. farce	2	
2.	Tricks, Eth. sketch	5	2
104.	Two Awfuls, Eth. sketch	5	
5.	Two Black Roses, Eth. sketch	4	1
28.	Uncle Eph's Dream, Eth. sketch, 2 scenes	3	1
156.	United States Mail, Eth. farce	2	2
134.	Unlimited Cheek, Eth. sketch	4	1
62.	Vinegar Bitters, Eth. sketch	6	1
32.	Wake up, William Henry, Eth. sketch	3	
39.	Wanted, a Nurse, sketch	4	
75.	Weston, the Walkest, Dutch sketch	7	1
93.	What Shall I Take? Eth. farce	7	1
29.	Who Died First? Eth. sketch	3	1
97.	Who's the Actor? Eth. farce	4	
137.	Whose Baby is it? Eth. sketch	2	1
143.	Wonderful Telephone, Eth. sketch	4	1
99.	Wrong Woman in the Right Place, sketch, 2 scenes	2	2
85.	Young Scamp, Eth. sketch	3	
116.	Zacharias' Funeral, Eth. farce	6	

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